



London Printed for John Bell British Library Nov. 20th 1782. ^{Cook Sculp}

Severard de
Lond



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Lond

Poeta. 1882

BELL'S EDITION
The POETS of GREAT BRITAIN
COMPLETE FROM
CHAUCER to CHURCHILL.



CHAUCER VOL. I.
Fayn wolde I do you myrthe and I wylle how
And of a myrthe I am right now bethought
To don you ese.

Prod. of the time. Folio P. 1. 1. line 7th.

Saunders del.

Granger scul.

London Printed for John Bell British Library Strand Aug. 1. 182

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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
GEOFF. CHAUCER.

IN FOURTEEN VOLUMES.

THE MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

From Urry's Edition 1721,

THE CANTERBURY TALES

From Tyrwitt's Edition 1775.

Grete well CHAUCER whan ye mete----

Of dities and of songes glade,

The which he----made,

The londe fullfilled is over all.

GOWER.

My maister CHAUCER----chiefe poete of Bretayne----

Whom all this londe schulde of ryght preferre,

Sith of our langage he was the loke-skerre----

That made first to dyspyle and rayne

The gold dewe dropys of speche and eloquence

Into our tunge thurgh his excellence.

LYDGATE.

The honour of Englysh tong is dede----

My maister CHAUCER, floure of eloquence,

Mirroure of fructuous ententement,

Unversel fadir in science----

This londis verray trefour and riehesse----

The firste fynder of our fayre langage.

OCCLEVE.

Venerabill CHAUCER, principall poete but pere,

Hevinly trumpet, orlege and reguler,

In eloquence balme, condist and diall,

Mylky fountane, clere strand, and rois riall,

Of fresche endite throw Alboun island braid.

DOUGLAS.

O reverend CHAUCER! rose of rethouris all,

As in oure toung flour imperial

That raise in Brittane evir, quha reidis right

Thou beiris of Makers the triumphs royall,

The fresche enamilt termes celestiall:

This mater couth half illuminit full bricht,

Was thou nocht, of our Inglis all the light,

Surmounting every young terrestriall

As far as Mayi's morrow dois midnight.

DUNBAR.

VOL. I.

EDINBURG:

AT THE Apollo Press, BY THE MARTINS.

Anno 1782.



THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
GEOFFREY CHAUCER.
VOL. I.

CONTAINING HIS

LIFE, *with*
PREFACES,

INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSES,

ACCOUNT OF HIS WORKS,
TESTIMONIES OF AUTHORS
CONCERNING HIM,

&c. &c. &c.

But natheles certain
I can right now no thrifty Tale sain,
But CHAUCER, (though he can but lewedly
On metres and on riming craftily)
Hath sayd hem in swiche English as he can
Of olde time, as knoweth many a man;
And if he have not sayd hem, leve brother,
In o book, he hath sayd hem in another----
Who so that wol his large Volume seke. *TALES, ver. 4465.*
Dan CHAUCER, well of English undefil'd,
On Fame's eternal bead-roll worthy to be fil'd----
Old Dan Geffrey, in whose gentle spright
The pure well-head of poetry did dwell----
He whilst he lived was the soveraigne head
Of shepherds all-----

SPENSER.

Old CHAUCER, like the morning star,
To us discovers day from far;
His light those mists and clouds dissolv'd
Which our dark nation long involv'd;
But he descending to the shades
Darkness again the age invades.

DENHAM.

CHAUCER, him who first with harmony inform'd
The language of our fathers... His legends blithe
He sang of love or knighthood, or the wiles
Of homely life, thro' each estate and age
The fashions and the follies of the world
With cunning hand portraying----

Him who in times-----

Dark and untaught began with charming verse
To tame the rudeness of his native land.

AKENSIDE.

EDINBURG:

AT THE Apollo Press, BY THE MARTINS.

Anno 1782.



DIRECTIONS TO THE BINDER

In doing into sets

SELL's Poets of G. Brit. from Chaucer to Churchill.

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17. Congreve, b. ab. 1671, d. 1729, ag. 58, 1 do.	56
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50. Churchill, ——— d. 1764, 3 do.	

TITLES.

POETS OF G. BRITAIN I	POETS OF G. BRITAIN XV	POETS OF G. BRITAIN XXIII
CHAUCEUR I—14	SPENSER I—8	DONNE I—3

And so on to the end of the 109 volumes.

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GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER, the Father of our English poets, and the first great improver and reformer of our language, flourished in the 14th century, and as he justly obtained the highest admiration amongst his contemporaries, so his memory has ever since been highly honoured. One would imagine from this that every historical circumstance relating to him, or at least those of the greatest moment, should be well preserved, and be perfectly clear, which however is so far from being the case that nothing can hitherto be certainly determined concerning his descent, or so much as who was his father: Leland says that he was of a noble stock, Pitts that he was the son of a knight, Speght that his father was a vintner, Hearne that he was a merchant, and the fifth and last opinion, which is the best, is, that nothing can be said with any tolerable assurance of his family at all, but that there is somewhat more probability of his being the son of a gentleman rather than of a tradesman*.

* *Rather than of a tradesman.*] It is a point well agreed amongst our ancient authors that the French surname of this family, which was variously written, as for instance Chaucier, Chaucierris, Chaussier, Chausir, &c. signified a shoemaker; but notwithstanding this it is very well known that the founder of this family in England was a Norman chief that came over with William the Conquerour, as appears by the roll of Battle-Abbey; and in succeeding times there were several persons of note

The place of his birth is as much disputed, but however may be determined with greater appear-

of this name mentioned in our records. In the reign of King John there was one le Chaufur, as appears by the records in the Tower; and in the reign of Henry III. one Elias Chaucefir, who in the reign following, viz. Edward I. had a grant of ten shillings from the Treasury; there was also one John Chaucer, of whom King Edward I. heard a complaint for a thousand pounds: but all this gives us no kind of certainty in respect to our Author's family at all. Leland contents himself with hinting that he was of a genteel extraction, *nobili loco natus*, are his words; and it is said that he is faithfully copied by Bale; but this is to be understood of the later editions of his book, for in the first he calls him Sir Geoffrey Chaucer Knight, and says nothing of his family at all, afterwards he met with Leland's book, and abridged his account of him. John Pitts is very clear that he was of an exceeding good family, and not only a knight himself but his father a knight before him; but his authority goes for little, more especially with those that know him best. Mr. Speght is of opinion that one Richard Chaucer was his father, who was a vintner at the corner of Kirton-Lane, and dying in 1348 left his house, tavern, and stock, to the church of St. Mary Aldermary, where he was buried. This passed currently with Fuller, and perhaps the better because it furnished him with a very silly jest; "His father," says he, "was a vintner in London, and I have heard his arms quarrelled at being *argent and gules, strangely contrived, and hard to be blazoned*: "some more wits have made it the dashing of white and red wine (the parents of our ordinary claret) as nicking his father's profession." Against this opinion, however, there lie two exceptions that solid heads than his have not been able to get over; the first is that there was something very unnatural in this vintner's leaving all his estate to the church while his son was at the university; and the second that Chaucer should never complain of this, or, for any thing that we can discover, feel the effects of it, since it is evident enough that in his youth he lived at a rate that could not have been supported without

ance of truth, for though Bale says he was a Berkshire man, and Pitts would entitle Oxfordshire to his birth, yet if we may rely upon what he tells us himself (*Test. of Love*) it is much more likely that he drew his first breath in the city of London; and that he had a great interest amongst its inhabitants is a thing as certain as that it drew upon him many misfortunes,

a fortune. The industrious Mr. Hearne thinks it probable his father was a merchant of London; but the last writer of his life thinking that father not good enough for him hath found him out a better, one Sir John Chaucer, for which he has no other evidence than that such a man lived at a time when our poet might possibly have been his son. I must confess I think he was of a good family, and that for various reasons, which because I do not know they have been taken notice of before I will mention as briefly as I can. First then, his education speaks him a gentleman bred at both the Universities, travelled through several countries, and at last a student in the Temple, where it is reported that he was fined two shillings for beating a friar in Fleetstreet. Next, his post at court shews him to have been a gentleman, for birth was much stood upon in those days, and young men of the best quality were the King's pages. Thirdly, this is confirmed by his marriage, which so proud a man as John of Gaunt would not have admitted if he had been of a mean descent, much less have recommended him to his wife, and thereby made him the uncle-in-law of his own children. Fourthly, his writings shew him a gentleman, for they are all written with such freedom and spirit as must have exposed him to great envy if he had not been a gentleman, and which he would probably have appeased by some reasonable apology. Lastly, the company he kept, and the respect that was constantly paid him, seem the clearest testimonies of this, which with the rest I submit to the decision of the intelligent reader.

notwithstanding which his having that interest seems to be a corroborating proof of his being a citizen's son*.

* *Of his being a citizen's son.*] It seems to have been a doubt with Leiland whether Oxfordshire or Berkshire produced this great man, but he thought he had reason to think that he was born in one of those counties. If Berkshire was to be preferred, then Dunnington would bid the fairest for it, which was certainly Chaucer's seat; but then it seems to be no less certain that he purchased it from Sir Richard Adderbury. Pitts affirms roundly that he was born at Woodstock, and Camden, speaking of that place, says, that having nothing in it else remarkable it boasts of having produced our English Homer, Geoffrey Chaucer: but he was too knowing a man to credit this; he knew the reason of it to be that Chaucer had a house there, and Ewelme and Hocknorton in the same county were also belonging to his family, and might therefore with as much justice as Woodstock put in a claim to his birth. But Chaucer himself seems to have determined the point as clearly as man could do, for speaking of the troubles that had happened in this place he says, "The city of London, that is to me so dear and sweet, in which I was forth-grown; and more kindly love have I to that place than any other on earth, as every kindly creature hath full appetite to that place of his kindly engendruer," &c. and therefore Camden very justly takes occasion, speaking of another poet, to affirm that London was our Author's birthplace: "Edmund Spenser," says he, "a Londoner, was so smiled on by the Muses at his birth that he excelled all the English poets that went before him, if we except only his fellow-citizen Chaucer." It may seem a little difficult to reconcile what is said in this note to what has been advanced in the former, and yet it may be done tolerably well, for though we now consider a citizen of London as a trader of course, yet in the times when Chaucer lived men of great quality and distinction resided in the city, where the court was also kept, and therefore he might very well be in this sense the son of an inhabitant of London, and still his father might not be either merchant or vintner, but in some post about the court; and this is

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The time of his birth is pretty well fixed, for most of the writers who mention it agree that it was in the second year of Edward III. A. D. 1328.

Here again we fall into the dark, for as to his earlier years we know not where or how they were spent; but as soon as he was fit for academical studies he was sent to Cambridge, where he gave early testimonies of his abilities by several elegies and sonnets, as well as by a poem called *The Court of Love*, which he composed when he was about eighteen, and which carries in it very pregnant proofs of skill and learning, as well as quickness of wit and great strength of genius†. It is

so dark a matter, and which has employed so many learned pens, without letting in much light upon it, seems the most probable account of the matter: for in that discourse in which he speaks of London as his birthplace he very clearly confesses that he had been but too deeply engaged in the popular disturbances that happened there, through his attachment to his patron the Duke of Lancaster, which shows the interest he had among the people; and yet he affirms that in what he did he had no evil intention, much less meant to throw all things into confusion; and offers it as a reason why he should be believed in declaring this, that he was a native of London, and loved it better than any place upon earth, as every creature naturally does the place from which it springs. After clearing up those points as far as possible we shall be more brief in our remarks upon other points of this history, though a large and full life of Chaucer seems to be a work still wanting to the learned world after all the pains that has been hitherto taken about it.

† *And great strength of genius.*] The most certain accounts we have of Chaucer are those taken from his own writings, in which there are a great variety of circumstances that occur not

not by any means certain in what college or hall of that university he studied, but it is conjectured, and

in any of the ancient relations of his life, inasmuch that it is very doubtful whether we should ever have heard any thing of his being a student at Cambridge if he had not left us that particular himself. In like manner it might have been presumed, but it could hardly have been proved, that his Court of Love was not his first performance, or at least his first performance that made any great figure. But from the perusal of this poem we learn from himself that he had written many things before in honour of the deity of Love. Indeed the poem itself speaks it probable, for though we have a very high idea of the natural genius of Chaucer, yet it would be impossible to persuade any judge of poetry that this was his first essay, for not only the structure of the poem manifests an extraordinary skill in that kind of writing, but the harmony of his numbers, even at this distance of time, sufficiently shew that they could not fall from the pen of an unpractised poet. It is generally believed, upon the credit I apprehend of the rubrick placed at the head of this performance, that it was written in imitation of The Romant of the Rose; but I must confess I am not very well satisfied of that, and should rather be of opinion that our Author composed it after the manner of those Italian poems that were then so generally esteemed, and for which the famous Francis Petrarch had been crowned some years before with great solemnity at Rome. The honours which that celebrated poet acquired, and which he had never acquired but in an age of the greatest gallantry, excited all who had any turn that way to emulate his performances. We may very plainly perceive in this work of Chaucer's that he meant to make his entrance by it into the region of Parnassus, and boldly resolved, on the strength of his own judgment as well as of his genius, to declare himself a poet, and put himself that way into the road to fame. If this had not been his intention he would have scarce written The Court of Love, the ground of which poem is to shew that it was a tribunal to which every man owed obedience, which sooner or later he was obliged to pay. As for

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not without some shew of reason, that it might be in Solers's Hall, which he has so particularly and humorously described in his story of The Miller of Trompington.

He removed from Cambridge, for reasons which we find no where assigned, to the university of Oxford, and completed his studies there, some say at Canterbury College, which however is improbable, since it was not founded till Chaucer was thirty-five years of age, others in Merton College, which is more likely; for though his name does not appear among the celebrated members of it at that time, yet we find most of his contemporaries, as Strode, Occleve, &c, were of that college. After a considerable stay here, and a strict application to the publick lectures of the university, he became, as Leland tells us, a ready logician, a smooth rhetorician, a pleasant poet, a grave

himself, he professes that he was summoned to do suit and service at the age of eighteen, which affords him an opportunity of describing the Court, the manner of its proceedings, and the statutes of Love by which those proceedings are regulated. This poem is very long, consisting of upwards of fourteen hundred verses, and concludes with the festival of Love, which with great elegance our poet fixes upon the 1st of May, and makes it celebrated by the birds: yet this part of the poem is the most exceptionable of any, and shows what a strange taste prevailed in that age; for in this festival not only the hymns of the church but the Psalms themselves are very scandalously profaned, and applied to the god of Love and his mother, which shows the bad consequences that naturally flow from superstitious devotion.

philosopher, an ingenious mathematician, and a holy divine. That he was a great master in astronomy is plain from his Discourses of the Astrolabe; that he was versed in the Hermetick philosophy appears by his Tale of the Chanon's Yeoman; his knowledge in divinity is evident from his Parson's Tale; and his philosophy from The Testament of Love.

After he left this university he travelled abroad through France and the Low Countries in order to see the world, and to improve the knowledge which he had acquired from books; but when he went abroad or at what time he returned are circumstances not easy to be determined. Yet sure there is a probability that he spent not many years out of his own country, since the best writers seem to be well satisfied that after his return he entered himself of the Middle-Temple, and became a student there of the municipal laws of this land. Of this learning having received some tincture he betook himself to the court, which was indeed the place in the world fittest for a man of his accomplishments to thrive in. His first employment there was in quality of the King's Page, in those times a very honourable office, as it gave near and frequent access to the royal presence; but one would imagine this was not a post to which any but a young man could be advanced upon his coming to court, and therefore it seems most consistent with truth

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to believe that Geoffrey Chaucer could not at his admittance exceed thirty †.

† *Could not at that time exceed thirty.*] We have intimated in the text that our Author seems to have owed his admittance into the King's service in quality of Page, which in the Latin of those times was called *valettus* or *valedus*, an honour that young noblemen of the first rank were glad to accept, to the favour of the King's son John of Gaunt, afterwards Duke of Lancaster, of which no notice is taken by any of those who have hitherto collected the memoirs of his life. Yet we do not assert this without authority, for it appears by a poem of his called Chaucer's Dream, first printed in the year 1597, that he was very deep in this young prince's amorous secrets, for that poem is an allegorical history of the loves of John of Gaunt and Blanch of Lancaster, daughter of Henry Duke of Lancaster, which from this very poem it appears were managed with the utmost secrecy, till by a long train of intrigues and solicitations all the obstacles in the way of this match were got over, and with the help of the King's consent and the Pope's dispensation they were married in May 1359, which as it was the first introduction to John of Gaunt's vast power and greatness, so it seems to have been the beginning of our Author's fortunes at court; at least it is certain that the knowledge he had of this affair was what made him equally the favourite of the Duke of Lancaster and of the Duchess Blanch, who as the highest testimony of her friendship gave him the sister of her favourite lady in marriage, which is also intimated at the close of this poem. But this is quite a different thing from another under the same title that in the old manuscripts is and ought to be entitled *The Book of the Duchess*, written not upon her marriage but upon her death, and this being wrote in the manner of a vision, and the other not being discovered, came to be called Chaucer's Dream, because that title appeared in some old lists of his Works. As the credit of the Duke of Lancaster increased with his father, Chaucer's also rose in a like proportion, for he continued steady to his patron to the last hour of that duke's life; and indeed considering his alliance

At this time the English court was the most gay and splendid in Europe. Edward III. a prince equally distinguished by civil and martial virtues, sat then upon the throne, blessed with an illustrious consort, by whom he had a numerous posterity. His many victories had rendered him famous abroad, and his moderation and clemency, his reverence for the laws, and his kindness for his people, made him beloved at home, so that our Chronicles boast of few reigns more glorious, and of none brighter, than his. Among other great qualities with which this famous monarch was endued his love of learning and learned men was not the least conspicuous, and therefore we need not wonder that our Author, who was continually giving some specimen or other of the vivacity of his parts, wrought himself into high favour, insomuch that it appears that he was a constant attendant on the court, and when it was at Woodstock resided at a square stone house near the park-gate, which still retains his name; and well indeed it may, since being consecrated in his poems the whole country round about is become, in respect to Englishmen, a kind of classic ground †.

as well as his obligations we need not at all wonder that he did: but after saying all this it will be very proper to add, that notwithstanding his fidelity to his patron he did not go all lengths with him, but kept exactly within the bounds of loyalty to his prince as well as those of duty to his benefactor.

† *A kind of classic ground.*] In order to justify this we need only observe that many of the rural descriptions that occur in his Works are taken from Woodstock-Park, of which he tells

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But besides his employment about the person of his prince our poet took pains to advance his fortune by

us that it was a park walled with green stone, that being the first park walled in England, and not many years before his time. In most of his pieces where he designs an imaginary scene he certainly copies it from a real landscape; so in his Cuckoo and Nightingale the morning walk he takes was such as at this day may be traced from his house through part of the park, and down by the brook into the vale under Blenheim-Castle, as certainly as we may assert that maples instead of phyllereas were the ornaments round the bower, which place he likewise describes in his Dream as a white castle standing upon a hill, the scene in that poem being laid in Woodstock-Park. When disengaged from publick affairs his time was entirely spent in studying and walking: so agreeable to him was this exercise, that he says he preferred it to all other sports and diversions. He lived within himself, neither desirous to hear nor busy to concern himself with the affairs of his neighbours. His course of living was temperate and regular; he went to rest with the sun and rose before it, and by that means enjoyed the pleasures of the better part of the day, his morning walk and fresh contemplations. This gave him the advantage of describing the morning in so lively a manner as he does every where in his Works; the springing sun glows warm in his lines, and the fragrant air blows cool in his descriptions; we smell the sweets of the bloomy haws, and hear the musick of the feathered choir, whenever we take a forest walk with him. The hour of the day is not easier to be discovered from the reflection of the sun in Titian's paintings than in Chaucer's morning landscapes. 'Tis true those descriptions are sometimes too long, and, as it is before observed, when he takes those early rambles he almost tires his reader with following him, and seldom knows how to get out of a forest when once entered into it; but how advantageous this beautiful extravagance is most of his successors well know, who have very plentifully lopt off his exuberant beauties, and placed them as the chief ornaments of their own writings.

attaching himself to the service of John of Gaunt Duke of Lancaster, by whom and by his Duchess Blanch, a lady equally remarkable for her wit and virtue, he was exceedingly beloved; nor was it long before he became part of their family also. It happened thus. This Duchess entertained in her service one Catharine Rouet, daughter of Sir Payne or Pagan Rouet, a native of Hainault, and Guien King at Arms for that country, who was afterwards married to Sir Hugh Swynford, a knight of Lincoln. He lived not long after their marriage, and upon his decease this lady returned into the Duke's family, and was appointed governess of his children. She had a sister whose name was Philippa, a great favourite likewise with the Duke and Duchess, and by them therefore, as a mark of their great esteem, recommended to Chaucer for a wife. He married her about the year 1360, when he was in the flower of his age, and, as appears from a picture of him taken about that time, one of the handsomest persons about the court, of a complexion fair and beautiful, his lips very red and full, his size of a just proportion, his air very graceful and majestick. We live at too great a distance of time to be able to penetrate with certainty into the true motives of our Author's match, but sure there is a great probability that he was not unacquainted with the tenderness which his patron the Duke of Lancaster had for the Lady Swynford, by whom he had se-

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veral children, who were afterwards legitimated by act of parliament. Yet this alliance was not the only tie he had upon that prince, one of the most ambitious and artful men of his time, and always embarked in some state-intrigue or other, and therefore above all things fond of having men of parts and literature about him, of whom he might make use as occasion offered, and in which capacity as there was none more able, so it appears there were none did him greater service than Chaucer.

Being thus supported we need not wonder that his fortunes made a very quick progress at court, and accordingly we find very many marks of his master King Edward's kindness towards him; as for instance, in the 41st year of his reign he granted him an annuity of twenty marks *per annum* out of the Exchequer. How mean soever such a pension may seem now it was then very considerable, and in Chaucer's case was still the more valuable as being an earnest of future favours, for not long after we find him Gentleman of the King's Privy-Chamber, and by that title the King granted to him, by letters patents dated in the 45th year of his reign, the further sum of twenty marks *per annum* during his life.

In this station he did not long continue, being next year made Shieldbearer to the King, a title at that time, though now extinct, of great honour, such persons being always next the King's person, and gene-

rally upon signal victories rewarded with military honours. Neither were these all the instances he received of the King's attention to and confidence in him, for in the very same year, and by the same title, we find him commissioned, in conjunction with other persons, to treat with the republick of Genoa; and accordingly thither he went, and actually managed a negotiation, concerning the subject of which those who have written our Author's life make not the least mention, but seem to treat it as a matter, at this distance of time, altogether inexplicable. But it may from the history of that prince's reign be very probably inferred that Chaucer was sent to Genoa to hire ships for the King's navy; for in those times though we frequently made great naval armaments, yet we had but very few ships of our own, and this defect was supplied by hiring them from the free states either in Germany or Italy. In this negotiation our Author succeeded so well that upon his return home he received new marks of his royal master's favour, for by letters patents dated at Windsor the 23d of April in the 48th year of his reign, his Majesty granted him a pitcher of wine daily in the Port of London, to be delivered by the Butler of England; and very soon after he was made Comptroller of the Customs in the Port of London for wool, wool-fells, and hides, with a proviso that he should personally execute that office, and keep the accounts of it with his own hand. As this was a

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very lucrative so it was a very reputable employment likewise, and as Chaucer was enriched by the profits of his post, so his reputation was very much increased by that diligence and integrity with which he discharged it. He values himself, as he had reason to do, very much upon his conduct in this office, which he affirms was never liable to any kind of imputation. And indeed it is highly probable that what he has delivered upon this subject is strictly true, for in the latter end of King Edward's reign there were great frauds and embezzlements committed in the Customs, which by prosecutions were brought to publick view, but we do not find that in these Chaucer's name was so much as mentioned. About a year after he was in possession of this office the King made him a grant of the lands and body of Sir Edmund Staplegate, son of Sir Edmund Staplegate of Kent, in ward, for which he received one hundred and four pounds; and other pecuniary advantages he had, which enabled him to raise altogether an income of one thousand pounds *per annum*, which was in those days a prodigious sum, and might well enable him to live, as he says he did, with dignity in office, and with good will amongst his neighbours. But as all these benefits arose chiefly from the favour in which he stood with the potent and ambitious Duke of Lancaster, so he became daily more and more involved in the political intrigues of that active and ambitious prince. It is suggested by many of our

historians that this duke had cast a longing eye upon the crown, and it is attributed to this that about the time our Author was sent to Genoa the King declared, in full parliament, the young Prince Richard, the only surviving son of Edward the Black Prince, heir-apparent to the crown. But there seems to be a plainer and more natural reason for the King's taking this step, in which none more readily concurred than the Duke of Lancaster, and that was his own and his son's going abroad to carry on the war in France, upon which occasion it was requisite that the succession should be settled, and therefore the young Prince Richard was not only declared heir-apparent, but the government of the kingdom was, nominally at least, intrusted with him during the absence of his grandfather, his father, and uncles. But what seems to be a stronger proof of the Duke of Lancaster's innocence in this respect was his marrying, upon the decease of his Duchess Blanch, the Lady Constantia, daughter of Peter the Cruel King of Castile and Leon, in whose right upon the decease of her father he assumed those royal titles. This must be allowed to be a mark of his ambition, and of his inclination to be a king, but at the same time it is a proof that he had another crown in view than that of England, and therefore to this we may well ascribe that device of his, of an eagle endeavouring with his bill to undo a footlock, which many of our writers, with more malignity than judgment,

have construed into a kind of treason. It is however true that after the decease of his eldest brother, Edward the Black Prince, he was associated by his father in the government, and had the principal direction of publick affairs, which considering his age, his experience, and his very near relation to the crown, may be looked upon as a thing rather natural than extraordinary.

In this happy season of his life, when he enjoyed all the blessings this world could afford, Chaucer composed most of those gay and lively pieces which were so much adapted to the humour of these times, and to that romanick spirit of love and fighting which in those days were so much in vogue, and by which he acquired so great and so extensive a reputation for his wit and for his capacity in writing *. But it was not

* *And for his capacity in writing.*] We have already mentioned some of the performances of our Author while a very young man; and also some of those pieces that he wrote to compliment the Duke of Lancaster and his Duchess. We will here take an opportunity of giving an account of some other pieces of his that were wrote within the time of his greatest prosperity. The Complaint of Mary Magdalen, taken from Origen, was translated either before or soon after his coming to court, perhaps to oblige some pious lady of those times, as he wrote that which is called Chaucer's A, B, C, for the use of the Duchess Blanch. The Complaint of the Black Knight was penned in honour of John of Gaunt's courtship of that lady, and is as elegant and harmonious a poem as any of our Author's composition, so that it is reasonable to believe he took extraordinary pains about it; and perhaps it would be no unreasonable conjecture if we should suppose that it was written upon his first admission to the intimacy of that great prince, who is repre-

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long before he found himself obliged to turn his thoughts to graver subjects, for his patron the Duke

presented under the character of the Black Knight. The House of Fame is also a most admirable performance, as well in the construction of the fable as in the ease and happiness of its execution, of which there cannot be a higher testimony than Mr. Pope's borrowing from thence the model of his Temple of Fame, which will probably be esteemed as long as there is either taste or poetry in this nation. The Assembly of Fowls was written while he was at court, and before the death of King Edward's queen Philippa; and so was his tale of The Cuckoo and the Nightingale, in which, as was observed in the preceding note, the scene is visibly laid in Woodstock-Park. He likewise wrote abundance of elegies, poems, or ballads, in honour of Margaret Countess of Pembroke, and other ladies of the court; and as it is natural to suppose that he was not the only person who wrote things of this kind, so by an accident common enough to great men, all of those pieces which have survived the injuries of time are come down to us under the name of Chaucer, though it might be very easily proved that they are none of his. The poem of Troilus and Creseide was written in the former part of his life, and translated, as he says, from Lollius, an historiographer of Urbino in Italy. He did not however content himself with making a close translation of his author, but, on the contrary, added many things of his own, and borrowed also from others, more especially his friend Petrarch, whatever he judged might render it acceptable to his reader. That discourse of Predestination which he has inserted in the fourth book is entirely his own; and from it, and from what he has delivered upon the same subject in The Nun's Priest's Tale, the very learned Sir Henry Savile thought that he was no stranger to Archbishop Bradwardine's learned book *de Causa Dei* published at that time. Sir Francis Kinsaston, who translated this poem into Latin rhymes, in his manuscript notes upon it says, that it was not improbably conjectured that Chaucer, in writing The Lives and Loves of Troilus and Creseide, glanced at some private persons in the court of King Edward III. and

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of Lancaster having espoused the cause of Wickliffe, whom the clergy considered as a heretick, Chaucer inclined the same way, and turned the edge of his satire against lazy monks, ignorant priests, and the insolence of such as belonged to ecclesiastical courts, with extraordinary success. Yet it does not at all appear that he was an enemy to religion, or even to that of the church of Rome, but rather the contrary, for he speaks very submissively of her doctrines, and bestows high characters upon such of the clergy as acted suitably to their calling; so that it was the ill men, who brought religion into contempt, and prostituted their own function in the vilest manner, that felt the severity of Chaucer's Muse, and not priests in general, or the Christian faith, for the former he highly revered, and the latter he firmly believed, as his writings plainly shew *. But how much soever Wickliffe's

did not follow Homer, Dares, Dictys, or any historian of those times. However, says he, Chaucer has taken the liberty of his own inventions; he hath made an admirable and inimitable epick poem, describing in Troilus a complete knight in arms and courtship, and a faithful and constant lover, and in Creseide a most beautiful and coy lady, which being once overcome yields to the frailty of her sex. We shall have occasion hereafter to speak more largely of this worthy person's performance, and of the pains he took to illustrate Chaucer, in which he equalled at least, if not exceeded, all who have spent their time in doing justice to this great poet.

* *As his writings plainly shew.*] The true design of our Author was not to expose or abuse the clergy from a dislike to their order, but, quite the contrary, to amend and to reform

doctrines might prevail, or Chaucer's writings please, among the better sort of people and in the country,

them; and it was with this view that he wrote many pieces and translated others, that they might plainly perceive how much religion suffered by the monstrous irregularities in their behaviour. As for instance, *The Romant of the Rose* is a translation from the French. This poem was begun by William de Lorris, and continued by John Meung, commonly called Clopinel, both famous French poets in their time. It seems to have been translated by Chaucer while he was at court, and about the time of the rise of Wickliffe's opinions, it consisting of violent invectives against the religious orders. It is left imperfect at the end, and there are some lacunas in other places of it. It may not be amiss to observe here that the original author of this work, William de Lorris, died in the year 1260, at the age of twenty-six, and advanced no great way therein, but forty years afterwards it was finished and published by John de Meung when he was in his twenty-fourth year. He was a man of sense and learning, well versed in divinity, philosophy, chymistry, astronomy, and other sciences, but was a violent enemy to bad priests and bad women: he is supposed to have died about the year 1365. This work is still much esteemed in France, where it has run through many editions, but the best, which was published in Holland, is of a very fresh date. Besides this Chaucer is affirmed by Leland and other ancient writers to have been the author of *The Plowman's Tale*, which bears very hard upon the vices of the clergy both secular and regular; and the satire under the title of *Jack Upland* is also attributed to him upon very good authority; notwithstanding which there want not many who, under colour of veneration for Chaucer's memory, are desirous of imputing these pieces to others; and yet this would be of little use, for in many other works that are undoubtedly his we find sentiments of the same nature. On the other hand the venerable John Fox thinks the labour of our Author in this respect worthy the highest commendation, and even attributes the preservation of his Works to a particular providence. Let us hear him. "I

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they were far enough from making a general impression on the minds of people in London, where the meaner sort of citizens were so warmly attached to the church, that upon the Duke of Lancaster's attending Wickliffe when he was summoned before the Bishop of London, and treating that prelate a little

"marvel to consider this," says he, "how that the Bishops
 "condemning and abolishing all manner of English books and
 "treatises which might bring the people to any light of know-
 "ledge, did yet authorise the Works of Chaucer to remain still
 "and to be occupied, who no doubt saw in religion as much
 "almost as ever we do now, and uttereth in his Works no less,
 "and seemeth to be a right Wicklavian, or else there was ne-
 "ver any; and that all his Works almost, if they be thoroughly
 "advised, will testify, (albeit it be done in mirth and covertly)
 "and especially the latter end of his third book of The Testa-
 "ment of Love, for there purely he toucheth the highest mat-
 "ter, that is, the communion, wherein except a man be al-
 "together blind he may espy him at the full; although in the
 "same book (as in all other he useth to do) under shadows co-
 "vertly, as under a vizor, he suborneth truth in such sort as
 "both privily she may profit the godly-minded, and yet not
 "be espied of the crafty adversary; and therefore the Bishops,
 "belike taking his words but for jests and toys, in condemn-
 "ing other books yet permitted his books to be read. So it
 "pleased God then to blind the eyes of them for the more
 "commodity of his people, to the intent that through the
 "reading of his Treatises some fruit might redound thereof to
 "his church, as no doubt it did to many. As also, I am partly
 "informed of certain which knew the parties, which to them
 "reported that by reading Chaucer's Works they were brought
 "to the true knowledge of religion: and not unlike to be true,
 "for to omit the other parts of his Volume, whereof some are
 "more fabulous than other, what tale can be more plainly told
 "than The Tale of the Ploughman?" &c.

roughly, they made a kind of insurrection, and marching down into the Strand in a body entered into and rifled The Savoy, which was the Duke of Lancaster's palace, built by himself, and at that time esteemed one of the finest houses in Europe, destroyed his goods, abused his servants, and turned his arms upside down, as if he had been a traitor; but by the care of the King, and the interposition of some of the principal nobility, this quarrel was compromised, and the Duke and the citizens reconciled, at least in appearance.

In the last year of King Edward the French having infringed the truce which that monarch had concluded with them, commissioners were sent over to expostulate that matter before the Pope's legates, and of these Chaucer was one. This negotiation of theirs was not very successful, only it produced some mention of a marriage between Richard Prince of Wales and the Lady Mary, daughter to the French king, and thereby made way for a new treaty, in which Sir Guiscard Dangle, Knight of the Garter, Sir Richard Sturrey, a great Wicklivist, and in high favour with the King, together with Geoffrey Chaucer Esq. were Commissioners; and this seems to have been the last publick employment that our Author bore, though from a gold chain about his neck, in that original picture of his still remaining as is before-mentioned, it has been not without some shew of reason conjectured that he was honoured with some other dignity than from any

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records we have been able to trace, for it can hardly be supposed that he wore this ornament on account of his office in the Customs.

June 21st 1377 the young Prince of Wales succeeded his grandfather by the title of Richard II. and his uncle the Duke of Lancaster considering the incapacity of the King, who was then but eleven years of age, was intrusted with the chief share of the administration, and therefore to ingratiate himself with the populace he resolved to solemnize the new monarch's coronation with greater pomp and magnificence than had been ever seen in this kingdom, previous to which a court of claims was established to settle the demands of those who should pretend to have a right to assist upon this occasion, and among these we find Geoffrey Chaucer*.

* *And among these we find Geoffrey Chaucer.*] The claim made upon this occasion was in right of his ward, who was possessed of the manor of Bilsington in Kent, which was held of the crown by the service of presenting to the King three maple cups on the day of his coronation. This manor had been purchased by Sir Edmond Staplegate, the father of Richard Fitz-Allen Earl of Arundel, whose family had been in long possession of it; and it was set forth in Chaucer's petition that the manor was held by Grand Serjeantry, by the owner's discharging the office of Chief Butler at the King's coronation. But Richard Earl of Arundel controverted this claim, and by his petition and plea set forth, that the office of Chief Butler belonged to his family, and was never annexed to this manor, his ancestors having enjoyed it both before they held that manor and since they parted with it, and therefore he demanded it as his proper right. The issue of this business was, that the Earl so far

It appears plainly that the Duke of Lancaster, who was now in the zenith of power, let slip no opportunity of serving so firm a friend and so useful a dependent as our Author was, for in the very beginning of this reign it appears that by letters patents dated March 23d 1377 the King confirmed his grandfather's grant of twenty marks a-year; and by other letters patents dated the 18th of April following he likewise confirmed the other grant of a pitcher of wine daily; but whether Chaucer remained in his office of Comptroller of the Customs is not so clear, though the contrary seems to be most probable, for in a short time after his affairs were in such confusion we find that, in the second year of King Richard, he was obliged to have recourse to the King's protection in order to screen him from his creditors; but how he came to fall into these difficulties, and whether they were temporary only or of a long continuance, is a point that at this distance it is not possible to

carried his point before John Duke of Lancaster, then acting as Lord High-Steward, as to be allowed to officiate for that time with a *salvo jure* that it should not infringe the right of Edmond Staplegate, or any who should pretend title for the future. This ward of our Author died about thirteen years after, but the manor continued in the family till the beginning of the reign of Henry VI. when it passed into that of the Cheyneys, who in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign sold it to Sir Francis Barham of London, and his grandson Mr. Robert Barham was in possession of it at the coronation of King Charles II. when Mr. Erasmus Smith, on the behalf of the said Mr. Barham, assisted at the coronation, and presented the three maple cups. This manor has since passed into other families.

ascertain; but from a comparison of circumstances it seems to be most likely that it was from some sudden accident he fell under this misfortune, and that he had recourse to the King's protection merely to gain time to settle his concerns. One may be the more confirmed in this by comparing his circumstances at this juncture with those of his family soon after. We have no direct historical lights indeed, but methinks though it be a new it is still a probable conjecture, that about this time he conveyed all his estates to his eldest son Thomas Chaucer; and the facts that seem to strengthen this conjecture shall be submitted to the reader's judgment at the bottom of the page*.

* *At the bottom of the page.*] All who have hitherto attempted to give any account of Chaucer's life have been very much at a loss about this circumstance of his having recourse to the King's protection, which shows that in the very beginning of this reign his affairs were in great disorder, and yet it is very plain that himself and his patron flourished in the full possession of power and plenty as long as King Edward III. lived. A certain writer hints that Chaucer exhausted his fortune in his foreign embassies; but a later writer observes, with greater probability, that he made his fortune by them; yet, as he very justly remarks, this by no means solves the doubt how he should come to be so very poor in so short a time, after his possessing so great wealth, for which amongst others we have his own authority. Now this riddle, I think, may be very probably explained thus. Our Author, Chaucer, about this time found out a very considerable match for his eldest son Thomas Chaucer, and this was Maud, the second daughter of Sir John Burgherthe, a man of very considerable rank, but by no means brother to Sir Bartholomew Burgherthe Knight of the Garter, and of Dr. Henry Burgherthe Bishop of Lincoln, Chancellor and Treasurer of England, as a

In the fourth year of King Richard the II^d's reign he procured a confirmation of the grants that had been formerly made to himself and to Philippa his wife, which is a proof that he had a great personal interest in this court, since at the time of his obtaining this grant the power and influence of the Duke of Lancaster certain writer very confidently asserts, but rather, if I guess right, the nephew of those great men, and the son of Sir John Burghershe, who was truly their brother; and this I am led to believe, because it appears upon record that the custody of this John Burghershe, the father of Maud, was granted in his nonage to the daughter of Sir Bartholomew Burghershe before-mentioned. A great fortune she was without doubt, but not the only daughter or sole heiress of her family, as has been represented, or at least not so at the time she married Thomas Chaucer, though she might be and indeed was so afterwards. Neither are we to believe what we are told of her being a ward to the crown, for her father was then living, and lived many years after, that is, to the 19th of Richard II. when he left behind him two daughters, Margaret the eldest, first married to Sir John Greuville Knight, and then to John Arundel Esq. and this Maud. Now my supposition is that Geoffrey Chaucer, for obtaining this great match, settled all his land estate upon his son, and that his doing this might bring upon him those demands which put him under the necessity of obtaining the King's protection. As to the several facts upon which this conjecture is built, I think they are supported by as good authorities as can be desired, nor can any great difficulty arise from the age of this young gentleman, as may appear thus: Chaucer married his wife Philippa Rouet about the year 1360, and if he had this son the next year he might be of full age in the latter end of the fourth year of Richard II. when this marriage took place, and before which in all probability the father might make this settlement. We shall have occasion hereafter to say more of this gentleman, who became a much greater man than his father, to whom he was a support in his declining years.

caster was very much sunk, as from a train of sinister accidents waiting upon his conduct he was become equally suspected by the King and disliked by the people. The great encouragement and support he had afforded to Mr. Wickliffe was attended with consequences that he did not in the least expect, and yet found it not in his power to hinder; for without doubt the Duke's great view in supporting this party was to weaken the power of the clergy, and to hinder them from taking so large a share as they did in the management of all temporal affairs; but some great men of his party, mistaking his view, pushed things to extremities, and by countenancing itinerant preachers without either learning or sound principles, made way for a sudden turn, which had very near subverted the constitution and thrown all things into confusion; for the common people, thus encouraged to shake off the yoke of the clergy, began to think that of the government also too heavy, and, taking occasion from some taxes lately imposed, rose up in arms under the conduct of Wat Tyler, Jack Straw, and such kind of leaders, with a wild intention of freeing themselves from whatever these wise leaders taught them to look upon as oppressions. Their resentment was chiefly directed against the clergy, as appears by their beheading the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Prior of St. John's by Smithfield, who was Lord Treasurer, and by their

burning that stately priory, and plundering the abbies of St. Alban's, Bury, and several others.

As soon as this rebellion was somewhat abated the parliament began to inquire into the cause of it; nor were there wanting enemies of Wickliffe who charged him and his followers with being the encouragers of it: but that is unlikely to be true; for had the rebels been Wickliffe's friends they would never have burnt The Savoy, the palace of his patron the Duke of Lancaster. However, some of his followers gave too much cause for such a surmise, as Dr. Hereford, who asserted that Archbishop Sudbury deserved that death he found; and the King the year following empowered the Bishops to arrest Wickliffe, and forbid his subjects to encourage any of that persuasion; yet Wickliffe appeared, and seemed partly to satisfy the Bishops with his opinion.

It is commonly said by most of our historians that from this time forward the Duke of Lancaster disowned the Wicklivites, and charging the late disturbances upon them styled their opinions the doctrine of devils. The writers also of our Author's life give into this opinion, and seem to think that he likewise began to temporize, and did not speak his sentiments so freely as formerly; but the truth is otherwise, for the Duke of Lancaster did not condemn Wickliffe's doctrine, but the doctrines of Dr. Hereford and other followers of Wickliffe, who had now deserted him,

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and propagated many dangerous tenets which he disclaimed. As for Chaucer, he was so far from abandoning his former notions that he exerted himself to the utmost in 1382 in the support of John Comberton, generally styled John of Northampton, Mayor of London, in his endeavours to reform the city, according to the advice given by Wickliffe, which was so much resented by the clergy, that rather than they would let this reformation proceed they had recourse to the most violent methods, and in order to prevent Comberton's being rechosen Mayor of London excited such disturbances as bordered upon a rebellion. The King making use of force upon this occasion, sent Sir Robert Knolles to London, who committed great severities, put some to death, made the late Mayor Comberton prisoner, and used his utmost endeavours to apprehend Chaucer†; but our Author,

† *His utmost endeavours to apprehend Chaucer.*] It is very certain that in this whole matter our Author suffered for his attachment to his party, but this is so darkly represented by such as have written his life that it is a very difficult thing to discover their meaning, and yet after all the fact is no more than this: there were at that time two powerful factions in the City, and as very seldom any thing of this kind happens but religion is drawn into the quarrel, so the one was supposed to be well affected to the church, and the other inclined to a reformation. Dr. Courtney, formerly Bishop of London, and now Archbishop of Canterbury, was protector of the one, and John Duke of Lancaster was esteemed to be the head of the other, and the leading man in his interest was this John Comberton, or John of Northampton, citizen and draper, on whose account

having an early foresight of his danger, made his escape into Hainault, and from thence went to France, where finding himself not so safe as he expected he withdrew

all this disturbance happened for which some lives were lost; and this unfortunate person being carried to Reading, was there tried and convicted, and had judgment given against him to be imprisoned for life, and to have his goods seized, which we find was accordingly done: and so strong the current ran at that time that he with some other citizens of his party were excepted out of a pardon which the King granted; and all this was then understood to be done in spite and contempt of the Duke of Lancaster, to whom Comberton steadily adhered, and called him *his Lord* at his trial. But for all this things came about again not long after, and Mr. Comberton had the honour to have his sentence reversed at the prayer of the Commons of England in parliament assembled. We may from all this infer, that how warm and indiscreet soever our Author, Chaucer, might be in supporting that party to which he had attached himself, yet beyond all question there was nothing of disloyalty in this, but quite the contrary; for those who had then the management of the King's affairs, and run him into all these warm and violent measures, were the very same persons who by their evil counsels brought him at last into that distressed condition which cost him first his crown and then his life. It is therefore no discredit to Chaucer that he was a friend to Wickliffe, or that he espoused this party in the City, however some of our historians may have represented or rather misrepresented it; for it is a thing well enough known to all who are conversant in the English history, that many base and black calumnies are thrown upon the Duke of Lancaster and his party, merely on account of their opposing the pride and power of the prelates of those times, who under colour of maintaining the King's prerogative really sacrificed him to their own interests, which at the same time also they very ill understood, since a reasonable compliance had both saved him and done themselves much more good.

into Zealand, and there concealed himself for some time, with several other Londoners, who had fled upon the same account, and whom he generously subsisted out of his own private fortune. But while he was in this distress most of those with whom he had been engaged at home had found ways and means to make their peace, and far from considering the calamities to which Chaucer had exposed himself for their sakes took no care to supply him, and, which was much worse, endeavoured to hinder the remittances that might have been made him out of his own fortune, and this in hopes that he might perish in his banishment, and by his death put them out of all fear. Such base and barbarous ingratitude though it extremely afflicted him, yet it did not put our Author upon taking any measures to be revenged; on the contrary, he came over privately into England to avoid starving in a strange country, but had not been long here before, either through the vigilance of the government's inquiries or the treachery of some whom he trusted, he was discovered, seized, and sent to prison, where he was treated at first with great rigour and severity, but in the end promised the King's pardon and his liberty if he would disclose all he knew, and put it in the power of the government to restore the peace of the City, which at length he did. It does not appear what the consequences were of his confession with respect to others, but with regard to himself

they brought upon him an inexpressible load of calumnies and slanders. All these circumstances we learn from himself in that most excellent treatise of his entitled *The Testament of Love*, which he wrote on purpose to vent his sorrow and to console himself under the heavy burden of his afflictions. This load, which was already almost too heavy for him, received however some very considerable additions from the concurrence of other untoward accidents, such as the Duke of Lancaster's losing much of his credit at court, and Chaucer not a little of his interest with the Duke, who finding his reputation very much injured by the liberties taken with his character on account of his amours with the Lady Swynford, he came, though very unwillingly, to a full resolution of parting with her, which he accordingly did; and this for a time affected the concerns of our Author extremely, who finding himself strongly pushed on one side by such as meant him ill, and little if at all supported on the other by such as had been formerly his friends, was so much depressed thereby in his mind and distressed in his fortune, as to resolve upon disposing of his pensions before-mentioned, which he had obtained in the former and had been confirmed to him in the present reign; and this he actually did to one John Scalby, as appears by a license obtained for this purpose on record. In this unexpected and terrible reverse of fortune he very wisely resolved to quit that busy scene

of life in which he had met with so many troubles, and to seek in retirement that happiness which from experience he knew was not to be met with in courts. The place he chose for his retreat was Woodstock, which had been the sweet scene of so much satisfaction to him in the days of his prosperity, and there he employed part of his time in revising and correcting his writings, totally secluded from the world, and tasting only those calm and solid pleasures which are the result of a wise man's reflections on the vicissitudes of human life. By this means he became well prepared for a new alteration in his condition, and as unexpected a change in his affairs as he had hitherto met with, for the absence of the great Duke of Lancaster which had cost him so dear, gave him the better title to hope his favour and his protection upon his return, which happened towards the end of the year 1389. He had made an expedition into Spain in order to recover the kingdoms of Castile and Leon, of which in right of his wife he had assumed the title; and though his success in war was at first various, and at last disastrous, yet so wise and prudent a prince he was, that after dismissing his army and seeming to relinquish that great design, for the accomplishment of which he had spent so much, he had notwithstanding so great address as to be able to extract even from his disappointment almost as much as he could have expected from victory; for though he could not make

himself a king, yet he made two of his daughters queens, one of Castile, and the other of Portugal, bringing home with him also a vast treasure in ready money, having at the time he landed in England, as one of our historians tells us, as many chests of gold as loaded forty-seven mules. Upon his return, in so good circumstances, his party began to revive, and the Duke recovered his credit at court, insomuch that the King in full parliament created him Duke of Aquitaine, and sent him over to take possession of that noble principality. His old affection for the Lady Catharine Swynford, sister to Chaucer's wife, revived with his fortune, and under colour of rewarding the care she had taken in the education of his daughters he made her very large grants in the nature of pensions*. We have no

* *He made her very large grants in the nature of pensions.* The colour given by the Duke of Lancaster to these grants made in favour of the Lady Swynford was the care she had taken of his two daughters Philippa and Elizabeth, as appears by the words of the grant of the wardship of Bertram de Sanbys's heir and of an annuity of two hundred marks *per annum* payable out of his honour of Tickhill, which words are these; "For the good and agreeable service which our thrice dear and most beloved Lady Catharine Swynford, the mistress of our most beloved daughters, hath rendered to our said children, we have given and granted, &c." But no doubt the true reason was for his special affection towards her on account of the children he had had by her, to whom he gave the name of Beaufort, in Latin *de bello forte*, from a castle so called in Anjou, which came into his family by the Lady Blanch of Artois Queen of Navarre. These children were four, *viz.* John Beaufort, afterwards Earl of Somerset, Henry Beaufort, afterwards Cardinal Bishop of Winchester and Chancellor of England, Thomas Beaufort, Earl

particular account of the benefits that accrued to Chaucer from this turn in the Duke's affairs, but notwithstanding this we have no reason to doubt that he felt the effects of his patron's prosperity, who had suffered so deeply by the declension of his influence. But it seems his distaste to courts was grown so strong that nothing could tempt him to quit his rural retirement, or to lanch again into that sea of business where he had been so lately shipwrecked. His mind however being more at rest he undertook and finished a new work, which has established his reputation with respect to learning upon as firm a basis as his former labours had fixed his fame for wit and genius. This new work plainly appears to be wrote in the year 1391, and was intended for the use of his younger son Lewis, then no more than ten years of age, and yet so forward in his learning as to be desirous of having his father's instructions in acquiring the principles of astronomy. This gave birth to his *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, which not only of Dorset, afterwards Duke of Exeter, and Joan, first married to Sir Robert Ferrers of Overly, and afterwards to Ralph Earl of Westmoreland. We have mentioned this more particularly, because of the near relation between the descendants of our Author and those of this lady by the Duke of Lancaster, of which we find it remembered by a very curious and circumspcct writer in the time of King Charles I. that there had been eight kings, four queens, and five princes, of England; six kings and three queens of Scotland; two cardinals, upwards of twenty dukes, almost as many duchesses of England, several Dukes of Scotland, besides many potent princes and eminent nobility in foreign parts.

shows the skill of its author, but likewise incontestably proves useful science was not at near so low an ebb in those times as it is generally represented. Neither will the case be at all altered if what some writers have suggested should really prove true, and this Discourse of Chaucer's appear to be no more than a translation, or, which seems to be still a more probable opinion, a collection from other authors who had written before him upon the same subject.

About four years after this, while her husband was in France, Constance Duchefs of Lancaster died, and was buried with great solemnity at Leicester, and the Duke coming over into England at the close of the year, and not meeting with quite so kind a reception at court as he expected, went suddenly to Lincoln, where his old mistress Lady Catharine Swynford resided, and to the great surprize of the world, now when she had not either youth or beauty to recommend her, married her. This gave great discontent to the Duchefs of Gloucester, the Countefs of Derby, the Countefs of Arundel, and other ladies descendd of the royal family, because she became by this marriage the second person in the realm, and from being no fit companion for any, was now suddenly to take place of them all; but she behaved with so much discretion and humility that these disputes were quickly composd, and in a short time she gained such an ascendancy over the King that he carried her, as well as the Duke her

husband, with him the year after their marriage into France, at which time he espoused Isabel the French king's daughter, then very young, and who was put under the care of the Duchefs of Lancaster.

After the ceremony of this marriage, and the return of the royal family to England, we find a very singular instance of the advantage that Chaucer received from this alliance, for now by letters patents the King granted him an annuity of twenty marks *per annum*, in lieu of that given him by his grandfather, and which in the time of his distress he had been compelled to dispose of for his subsistence. Soon after this he granted him his protection by other letters patents dated the 4th of May in the 21st year of his reign for two years, signifying that for that space he had occasion to employ him in his service. Neither was this the last or greatest instance afforded him of royal favour, since we find that by letters patents dated the 13th of October in the following year he had a pipe of wine annually granted out of the Customs of the port of London, which was to be delivered him by the Chief Butler, and to this office his son Thomas Chaucer was now raised.

But if these benefits cheered and comforted his decayed spirits in the decline of life, he had however the mortification to lose about the same time his noble patron, his constant friend, and kind brother, the Duke of Lancaster, by whom he was first brought to court,

and through whose favour he never wanted either countenance or support when it was in his power to bestow. This loss very probably afflicted him deeply, as we may gather from his retiring about this time to Dunnington-Castle, where he spent most of his days during the last two years of his life, indulging his grave thoughts in the solitude of that sweet retreat*.

* *Of that sweet retreat.*] It is not very clear at what time our Author quitted his beloved house at Woodstock in order to go to Dunnington-Castle, where he spent the last two years of his life, but as this was his final retreat, and became very remarkable for being so, an account of it cannot be unacceptable to the reader. It was in Mr. Camden's time (when in its glory) "a small but neat castle, situate upon the brow of a rising hill, having an agreeable prospect, very light, with windows on all sides, said to be built by Sir Richard Adderbury Knt. who likewise founded an hospital beneath it called God's House; it was afterwards the seat of Chancer, then of the De la Poles, and in our fathers' memory the dwelling of Charles Brandon Duke of Suffolk." At the beginning of the rebellion in the reign of King Charles I. it was a garrison for the King under the valiant Sir John Boys, which commanded the western road and town of Newbury, and was therefore of great advantage to the royal party as a safe retreat, and the cannon playing from it much annoyed the parliament forces. 'This place his Majesty honoured by lying one night in it, but after a rough assault and as bold a resistance, during which several of the towers were battered down, it was surrendered upon honourable conditions. 'This was the ancient state and the occasion of the late ruin of that pleasant structure. At present there is nothing to be seen of it but what raises horror and concern, a battered gateway with two towers, and some small part of the shattered walls, being all that remains thereof. The ground about it and the ruins of it are choked with brambles and overrun with ivy; but lest the place of its situation should in a

In this situation he was when that great revolution happened which placed Henry of Lancaster, the son of his brother-in-law, upon the throne, in which as Chaucer had no hand, (though certainly it could not displease him) so we do not find that he was at all eager in paying his compliments to the new King, much less that he triumphed in the misfortunes of his late kind master and gracious benefactor, as others, and particularly Gower, who had been more obliged to that unfortunate prince, and who at that time was both old and blind, most shamefully did. He did not however slight the advantages offered him by this revolution, but having accidentally lost the two last grants of an annuity, and of the pipe of wine by King Richard, he obtained a confirmation of them in the 1st

few years more he forgot I shall as plainly as I can describe it. It lies half a mile to the right of Spinhamland, (the ancient Spina of Antonius) a mile beyond Newbury, on the same side. As you go from London you pass over the river Kennet to the village of Dunnington, from which there is a pretty steep but pleasant ascent through a lane to a hill under the Castle, where stands a seat formerly belonging to the Countess of Sandwich: from hence arises the Cattlehill very steep, and not unlike that whereon the Observatory stands at Greenwich, and from this hill there is a very fine prospect of several counties. On the back of the Castle are level grounds, woodlands, and enclosures. The Castle itself stands in a pleasant park, in which there was a famous oak called Chaucer's Oak, under which, as tradition taught, he wrote several poems. Mr. Evelyn gives a particular account of this tree, and says there were three of them planted by Chaucer, the King's oak, the Queen's oak, and Chaucer's oak.

year of Henry IV. by an exemplification of his former letters patents. Neither was this the only favour he received from the new king, who out of regard to the ancient friendship and near alliance between the prince his father and our Author granted him, during the 1st year of his reign, an annuity of forty marks *per annum* for the term of his life. It is true indeed that a very great writer, a sincere admirer of our Author, and most deservedly a poet-laureate himself, informs us that Ch. enjoyed this honour under three kings, Edward III. Richard II. and Henry IV. ; but this is a mistake, for in truth there was no such office in those days, or, if we may trust to the authority of the learned Selden, before the reign of Edward IV. If we take this in a more extensive sense, for an eminent poet who celebrated these princes, it may be justly applied to Chaucer in regard to the two first, but we find nothing in his Works relating to the last, nor indeed is his name so much as mentioned in any of our Author's writings.

The small time he lived after the accession of this king was chiefly employed in regulating his private affairs, which had suffered by the publick disorders, for all the publick acts of the deposed King Richard in the 21st year of his reign being declared void, Chaucer was forced to quit his retirement to come up to Town to solicit his causes, and beginning now to bend under the weight of years, this unlucky accession

of business, which obliged him to alter his usual way of living, might very possibly hasten his end, the near approach of which he bore with Roman constancy, or rather with Christian patience; for there is still extant a kind of ode that he is said to have composed in his last agonies, which very plainly proves that his senses were perfectly sound, and the faculties of his mind not in the least impaired *. He died October 25th 1400, in the full possession of that high reputation which his writings had deservedly acquired, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, in the great south-cross aisle. Some writers have affirmed that he was first buried in the cloister, and lay there till some years after; but this is a mistake, for Caxton in his edition of Chaucer, (which was long before the time of his removal as they place it) says that he was buried in the Abbey-church of Westminster before the chapel of St. Bennet. And it is very probable he lay beneath a large stone of grey marble in the pavement, where the monument of Mr. Dryden now stands, which is in the front of that chapel, upon the erecting of which this stone was taken up and sawed in pieces to make good the pavement; at least this seems best to answer the description of the place given by Caxton. As to the alterations that have happened since, and the in-

* *And the faculties of his mind not in the least impaired.*] This sonnet or ode consists of no more than three stanzas: it is that entitled *Gods Counsaile of Chaucer*.

scriptions now visible on his tomb, an account will be given in the notes *.

* *In the notes.*] We are told by Speght and other authors that the following lines stood anciently upon Chaucer's tombstone.

Galfridus Chaucer, vates et fama poësis
Materne hac sacra sum tumulatis humo.

This anciently must refer only to the time of Caxton, who procured a long epitaph to be written in honour of our Author by Stephanus Surigonus, Poet-Laureate of Milan, which was hung upon a pillar over-against Chaucer's gravestone, towards the end of which epitaph these two lines occur. But about the year 1555, as a very exact author reports, or in 1556, as Wood will have it, Mr. Nicholas Brigham, a gentleman of Oxford who exercised his Muse much in poetry, and took great delight in Chaucer's Works, and honoured his memory, at his own charge erected a handsome monument for him not far from the said chapel, for in the same place he could not then conveniently erect it, by reason of the cancelli which the late Duke of Buckingham obtained leave to remove to make room for Mr. Dryden's tomb. Upon that monument Mr. Brigham caused Chaucer's picture to be painted from that which was in Occleve's book, together with the following inscription, which still remains;

M. S.

Qui fuit Anglorum vates ter maximus olim.
Galfridus Chaucer conditur hoc tumulo:
Annem si queras Domini, si tempora vitæ,
Ecce notæ subsunt quæ tibi cuncta notant.

25 Octobris 1400.

Grammarum requies mors.

N. Brigham hos fecit Musarum nomine sumptus.

1556.

In English thus.

Of English bards who sang the sweetest strains
Old Geoffrey Chaucer now this tomb contains:

We may justly affirm of this great man, that in whatever light he is considered he seems always to merit our esteem as well as to claim our admiration. In his publick character, if we consider the time in which he lived, we must acknowledge that he shew'd as great steadiness, and adhered as firmly to his

For his death's date if reader thou should'st call,
Look but beneath and it will tell thee all.
25th October 1400.

Of cruel cares the certain cure is death.

N. Brigham placed these, in the name of the Muses, at
his own expense, 1556.

About the ledge of the tomb we are told the following verses were written that are now worn out; but it is more probable that they were inscribed upon a ledge of brass that is taken away, for there is not the least sign of any letters upon the stone itself;

*Si rogites quis eram, forsitan te fama docebit;
Quod si fama negat, mundi quia gloria transit,
Hæc monumenta lege.*

*If who I was you ask Fame shall declare;
If Fame denies, since frail all glories are,
These stones shall speak, inscrib'd with pious care.*

It may not be amiss to observe, that this date of his death is preserved by several writers, who also inform us that he was then seventy-two. Some indeed have questioned it, because of a piece entitled Cupid's Letter, printed with Chaucer's Works, and dated in 1402; but that was written by Thomas Occleve a scholar, and was intended to do honour to his Works and memory. The Rev. Mr. Collier fixes his death in 1440, which is the 19 of Henry VI. and if so Chaucer was but ten years old at the death of King Edward III. which contradicts all the records, and is in every respect a most glaring absurdity, where the other date agrees with them exactly, and therefore there can be no doubt of its truth.

principles, as could be expected; and as to his gratitude towards and affection for his patron the great Duke of Lancaster, it stands in no need of apology. His conduct in the last part of his life was full of prudence and that calm contempt for an ungrateful world which though it is easy for a man of parts to conceive, yet to persist in it is a very difficult task. In private life he was a fine gentleman, a learned writer, and an agreeable companion. In his youth he was gay, and loved pleasure, for which he might not only plead the usual excuses of his age and constitution, but the custom also of the times, since he lived in the most gallant reign from the Conquest. But in his maturer state of life his manners altered, and his behaviour was modest and grave to a degree of excess, for which he was rallied by his patroness the Countess of Pembroke, who told him his absence created more mirth than his conversation, for he was very bashful and reserved in company, notwithstanding that life and spirit which appears in his writings. If we look upon him as an author, he may be truly styled the Father of English Poetry, and perhaps the Prince of it, for except the unavoidable defects of language his Works have still all the beauties that can be wished for or expected in every kind of composition. He was not unacquainted with the ancient rules of poetry, nor was he incapable of writing up to them, as very clearly appears by *The Knight's Tale*, which, as Mr. Dryden very justly says, is a

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nished epick poem; but he did not always judge this exactness necessary, and perhaps he thought his genius set him above those restraints that ought to limit, because they improve, the works of meaner poets. He was deeply versed in moral and in natural philosophy, and as perhaps no man understood human nature better, so it may be truly said that no writer in any language has either painted it with greater force, exactness, or judgment. His reading was deep and extensive, and his learning both specious and solid; for he knew how to expose those parts of it to view that are most apt to attract publick applause, and yet leave a sense concealed that might at once employ and satisfy the most inquisitive understandings. It would draw this article into too great a length should we persist in exhibiting every part of his accomplished character, and therefore we will in the notes give the best account we may of his merit in general as a poet in all the different kinds of writing by which he distinguished himself in that capacity †; and next we will give the reader the clearest

† *By which he distinguished himself in that capacity.* We may safely affirm that of Chaucer which can be hardly said of any other general poet ancient or modern, that he excelled in all the different kinds of verse in which he wrote. In his sonnets or love-songs, when he was but a very boy, there is not only fire and judgment, but great elegance of thought and neatness of composure. It is very true that he did not always stand upon his own ground, but chose rather to translate from the Italian or French; yet he chose his authors judiciously and used them freely; so that this, instead of sinking, serves really

account we may of his largest work, peculiar in its kind, and as it was almost without example, so hi-

to heighten his character. That in the elegiac poetry he was a complete master appears plainly by his Complaint of the Black Knight, the poem called La belle Dame sans Mercy, and several of his songs. He was an excellent master of love poetry, having studied that passion in all its turns and appearances; and Mr. Dryden prefers him upon that account to Ovid. His Troilus and Creide is one of the most beautiful poems of that kind, in which love is curiously and naturally described in its early appearance, its hopes and fears, its application, fruition, and despair in disappointment. How great a master he was in satire we shall have occasion to shew in the next note; but his great proficiency in this did not at all hinder his discharging himself most happily in a far more difficult way of writing, that of panegyrick. The praises of Chaucer are easy, natural, and delicate, such as must give equal pleasure to the person commended and to the peruser, and have always the true air of a courtier without the meanness of a flatterer. His moral poems are grave and weighty, full of good sense and of fine sentiments. In a word, he deserves all that is said of him by Mr. Dryden, who was scarce a better poet than a critic; let us hear him then a little upon this subject. "As he is the father of English poetry, so I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer or the Romans Virgil; he is a perpetual fountain of good sense, learned in all sciences, and therefore speaks properly on all subjects: as he knew what to say, so he knows also when to leave off, a continence which is practised by few writers, and scarcely by any of the Ancients excepting Virgil and Horace—Chaucer followed Nature every where, but was never so bold to go beyond her: and there is as great difference of being *poeta* as *et nimis poeta*, if we may believe Catullus, as much as betwixt a modest behaviour and affectation. The verse of Ch. I confess is not harmonious to us, but it is like the eloquence of one whom Tacitus commends, it was *auribus ipsius temperata accommodata*. They who lived with him, and some time

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"after him, thought it musical, and it continues so even in our judgment if compared with the numbers of Lydgate and Gower his contemporaries. There is the rude sweetness of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleasing though not perfect. It is true I cannot go so far as he who published the last edition of him, for he would make us believe the fault is in our ears, and that there are really ten syllables in a verse where we find but nine; but this opinion is not worth confuting; it is so gross and obvious an error that common sense (which is a rule in every thing but matters of faith and revelation) must convince the reader that equality of numbers in every verse which we call heroick was either not known or not always practised in Chaucer's age: it were an easy matter to produce some thousands of his verses which are lame for want of half a foot, and sometimes a whole one, and which no pronunciation can make otherwise. We can only say that he lived in the infancy of our poetry, and that nothing is brought to perfection at the first. We must be children before we grow men. There was an Ennius, and in process of time a Lucilius and a Lucretius, before Virgil and Horace; even after Chaucer there was a Spenser, a Harrington, a Fairfax, before Waller and Denham were in being; and our numbers were in their nonage till these last appeared."

* *I mean his Canterbury Tales.*] The scheme of this work is in every respect very extraordinary, and of so vast an extent that at first sight one would be apt to pronounce it absolutely impracticable, from a persuasion that it must surpass the powers of any single mind to paint the different lineaments, and call out to view the various faculties, of every mind. The truth as well as the meaning of this sentiment will best appear from a short representation of the Author's design, which is this: Chaucer pretends, that intending to pay his devotions to the shrine of Thomas à Becket, he set up his horse at the Tabard-inn in Southwark, that he found in the inn a number of pilgrims who severally proposed the same journey, and that they

We have already, in the course of his memoirs, spoken of most of his patrons, who were the greatest

all agreed to sup together, and to set out the next morning on the same party. The supper being finished the landlord, a fellow of sense and drollery, conformable to his character and calling, makes them no disagreeable proposal, that to divert them on their journey each of them should be obliged to tell two stories, one going, the other coming back, and that whoever in the judgment of the company should succeed best in this art of tale-telling, by way of recompense, at their return to his inn, should be entitled to a good supper at the common cost; which proposal assented to he promises to be their governor and guide. At the entrance of the poem the characters of all the pilgrims are distinctly drawn, and a plan of the comedy, in which they stand for the *Dramatis Personæ*. Besides this every Tale has its Prologue, and a kind of Epilogue too, which serves by way of transition to the next; and to the honour of our Author be it spoken, so far as his plan is executed every part of it is performed with equal justice and spirit, and above all the character of the Host, who acts as a kind of Chorus in the ancient drama, is most admirably kept up, and the same wit, spirit, and humour, is preserved through the whole journey that strikes and astonishes the reader so much at the very beginning, where the original character of this incomparable person is drawn at full length. A stronger argument in support of this character of The Canterbury Tales cannot well be brought than arises from the authority of three great poets who have judged them worthy of imitation and revival, I mean Spenser, Dryden, and Pope, to whom we may add Mr. Betterton, who translated many of the characters of Chaucer, and must have been allowed to have been as fit a judge of them as any of the foregoing. But the reader will receive the fullest satisfaction on this head from the critical remarks of Mr. Dryden, who as he perfectly understood so he has very freely given us his sentiments on this masterpiece of our Author's. "He must," says he, "have been a man of a most wonderful comprehensive nature, because, as it has been truly observed of him, he has taken into the compass of his

as well as ablest men of those times. The circle of his friends was also very large, and his communicative

“Canterbury Tales the various manners and humours, as we
 “now call them, of the whole English nation in his age: not a
 “single character has escaped him. All his pilgrims are severally
 “distinguished from each other, and not only in their inclina-
 “tions but in their very physiognomies and persons. Baptista
 “Porta could not have described their natures better than by
 “the marks which the poet gives them. The matter and man-
 “ner of their Tales, and of their telling, are so suited to their
 “different educations, humours, and callings, that each of them
 “would be improper in any other mouth. Even the grave and
 “serious characters are distinguished by their several sorts of
 “gravity; their discourses are such as belong to their age, their
 “calling, and their breeding; such as are becoming of them,
 “and of them only. Some of his persons are vicious, and some
 “virtuous; some are unlearned, (or, as Ch. calls them) lewd,
 “and some are learned. Even the ribaldry of the low charac-
 “ters is different; the Reeve, the Miller, and the Cook, are se-
 “veral men, and distinguished from each other as much as the
 “mincing Lady Priores and the broad-speaking gap-toothed
 “Wife of Bath. But enough of this; there is such a variety of
 “game springing up before me that I am distracted in my
 “choice, and know not which to follow. It is sufficient to say,
 “according to the proverb, that here is God’s plenty. We
 “have our forefathers and great-grandams all before us as
 “they were in Chaucer’s days; their general characters are
 “still remaining in mankind, and even in England, tho’ they
 “are called by other names than those of Monks and Friars, of
 “Chanons, and Lady-Abbeesses, and Nuns; for mankind is ever
 “the same, and nothing lost out of nature, though every thing
 “is altered.—Boccace lived in the same age with Chaucer,
 “had the same genius, and followed the same studies; both
 “writ novels, and each of them cultivated his mother tongue.
 “—In the serious part of poetry the advantage is wholly on
 “Chaucer’s side, for tho’ the Englishman has borrowed many
 “tales from the Italian, yet it appears that those of Boccace

disposition made him as much beloved by his contemporaries as he was admired both by them and by posterity. He appears to have been useful to them in every manner that was in his power, and it was this disposition, in all probability, that kept them so firm to his interest while he was living, and taught them to have so high a respect for his memory after his decease. It is no difficult thing to compile a list of them from his writings, in which he has mentioned them with all the marks of kindness and esteem possible, a circumstance favourable to himself and to them, for in this poets have the advantage even of princes; the latter, how great soever, can confer only temporary benefits, but the former can bestow immortality; and therefore princes themselves have courted, not perhaps without political reasons, the goodwill of these favourites of the Muses; but we are apt to suspect their praises when applied to their patrons of high rank more than their commendations of private friends; the former is commonly dictated by the head, whereas the latter flows from the heart, and this considera-

“ were not generally of his own making, but taken from authors of former ages, and by him only modelled, so that what was of invention in either of them may be judged equal. But Chaucer has refined on Boccace, and has mended the stories which he has borrowed in his way of telling, though perhaps allows more liberty of thought, and the expression is more easy when unconfined by numbers. Our countryman carries weight, and yet wins the race at disadvantage.”

tion alone makes it reasonable that we should insist more particularly on those whom our Author has thus consigned to fame: but in order to spare the reader's time we shall mention only a very few of Chaucer's intimate friends and contemporaries at the bottom of the page*.

* *At the bottom of the page.*] Amongst the earliest of Chaucer's friends, and also directors of his studies, were Nicholas of Lyne and John Some, both Carmelite monks, and extremely well versed in mathematical sciences, the former more especially, who left behind him several learned books, and is commended by Leland as having excelled in astronomy all that went before him. We have before mentioned Ralph Strode, who was both a celebrated poet and philosopher of Merton-college in Oxford, where it seems our Author was intimately acquainted with him, and had a great veneration for his abilities. It is a strange error which the author of the life of Chaucer prefixed to Mr. Urry's edition has fallen into with regard to Strode, who, he says, was a great follower of Wickliffe, which is so far from being true that he was one of the warmest writers against him, for which he is heavily censured by Bale, and as highly commended by Pitts. It is very probable that Wickliffe and Chaucer were very good friends, as they both owed the eminence of their respective stations to the same patron, John D. of Lancaster. Sir John Gower, an eminent lawyer, poet, and philosopher, was also Chaucer's intimate companion, as appears from both their writings; the former was blind before the latter died, and survived him only two years. But Thomas Occleve, or Hockliffe, a very ingenious man and a celebrated writer, was a great favourite of our Author's, and imitated him in his manner of writing. We are indebted to him for preserving Chaucer's picture, which he caused to be drawn, in his book *De Regimine Principis*, and which he dedicated to King Henry V. and it is very evident from the verses which refer to that picture that Chaucer had been a long time dead before he composed that work. Another scholar of his was the

That general applause with which his writings were received in his lifetime, and the high honours that were paid him by such as took a pride in styling themselves his disciples after his death, stamped such a mark of authority upon his Works as saved at least the greatest part of them from that oblivion which has covered the performances even of the most celebrated authors of his time. In spite of that spirit of envy which his free and severe satires excited in the clergy, in spite of his own Retraction, (whether genuine or fictitious is uncertain) in spite of that authority which the church afterwards acquired, not of censuring only but of condemning and prohibiting what books they pleased, his writings have escaped, and not barely escaped, but have been held in the greatest honour, and transmitted to posterity with such care and circumspection, and by the united la-

amous John Lydgate, a monk of Bury, who celebrates our Author's memory and writings in many of his pieces, and who outlived him forty years. Schogan also, who distinguished himself by his sarcastical wit, was a professed admirer and imitator of Chaucer; but, as Leland observes, if Chaucer, who sometimes styles Gower his master, excelled him in the spirit and elegance of his verses, Schogan, who acknowledged Chaucer for his master, was so far from doing the like that he fell much below him. Yet such in all ages has been the proneness of mankind to encourage even the coarsest kind of satire, that Schogan wanted not his admirers, how little soever he resembled Chaucer. It is believed that he was personally acquainted with the celebrated Petrarch, but that he was perfectly master of his writings and those of Boccace is incontestable.

hours of so many eminent persons, as will do lasting honour to his memory, and plainly prove that true genius, extensive learning, and a free spirit, are capable of commanding reverence through all ages, and preserving that transcendent esteem which is and ought to be the peculiar reward of superiour merit *.

* *And ought to be the peculiar reward of superiour merit.*] It must be allowed by all who are proper judges that the excellence attributed to Chaucer's writings by such poets as came nearest his own times did not arise in any degree either from custom or complaisance, but, on the contrary, was equally well founded in reason and on matter of fact; so that if we examine the sentiments we shall find them more noble, shall discover a greater compass in his learning, and above all an harmonious sweetness in his verse, far beyond any thing that is to be met with in any poetical compositions for a whole century after his time. This is very candidly acknowledged by a stranger, who had as good a right as any to dispute it, I mean that excellent old poet of Scotland, Gawin Douglas Bishop of Dunkeld. Indeed Chaucer's reputation was as well established in Scotland as in England, and I will take upon me to say that he was as much the Father of Poetry in that country as in this. It would render this note tedious to attempt giving a detail of the several printed editions of our Author's Works; it will be sufficient to refer the reader to the contents of this vol. where this may be found. Caxton, the Father of English Printers, first printed many of Chaucer's Works, and printed them several times. In the reign of Hen. VIII. William Botteville, *alias* Thynne, Esq. was the editor of a new edition of Chaucer, which in a very elegant discourse he addressed to King Hen. VIII. In the same reign the industrious and learned Leland was a studious reader and a most zealous admirer of the Works of Chaucer, in whose honour he wrote not one only but three copies of commendatory verses. The same tribute of praise was bestowed upon our Author by that excellent writer and great judge of ele-

We are not however to suppose that with all these great qualifications Chaucer could entirely escape the fury of false criticks, neither would it have been very much perhaps to his honour if he had, inasmuch as all great poets ancient and modern have been so generally infested by these cavillers that they seem to be the necessary attendance in all kind of writing, Roger Ascham, to whom we may add Sir Philip Sidney, who very judiciously observes, that it was equally strange to him that Chaucer should see so clearly in so misty a time, and that in brighter ages men should go so stumbly after him. About this time Mr. Speght, by the assistance of the industrious John Stowe, published a new edition of our Author's Works, which were dedicated to Sir Robert Cecil, afterwards Earl of Salisbury; and another still more complete edition was promised by Mr. Francis Thynne, which never appeared. We have mentioned the commendations given him by the laborious John Fox and the most learned Camden: we must add to these the numerous testimonies of the immortal Spenser, and the judicious apology of the supposed levities in Chaucer's Works by Mr. Francis Beaumont. The celebrated Sir Henry Savile mentions him with the highest respect; and the great Mr. Selden has given us a noble specimen of that profound learning of which he was master, in justifying an epithet of our Author's. Sir Francis Kynaston of Otely in Shropshire published the first and second books of a Latin version of *Troilus and Creseide*, and completed his translation of and notes upon the other three; and from some specimens that are extant in the Glossary at the end of Mr. Urry's edition the world may well perceive how valuable a performance we are deprived of by the loss or concealment of his manuscript. It would be needless to swell this note with other particulars, but if some able hand would resume the design of the late ingenious Mr. Ogle, and give us his *Canterbury Tales* in modern English, with a proper body of notes, there is no doubt that it would meet with a favourable reception.

tendants of an exalted reputation, and, like the slaves in a Roman triumph, make unwillingly an addition to that glory they meant to shade. Those who have attacked Chaucer have not presumed to question his wit, for of this perhaps no writer of our nation ever had more; neither have they disputed his poetical abilities, which certainly set his on a level with the greatest names in antiquity; nor have they dared to throw any aspersion on his learning, the extent of which is not greater than the masterly degree of propriety with which it is every where applied: but the point to which they object is his changing, debasing, or corrupting, our language, by introducing foreign words, as if the worth of all languages did not arise from their being thus enlarged and compounded, or as if Chaucer could have hurt the jargon of his time, which was not either Saxon, Norman, or French, but a mixture of all, by introducing words derived from the sweetest and smoothest language then used throughout Europe, I mean the Provençal. It is however just to observe that this reflection never made any great impression, and that with the best and most elegant writers in our tongue Chaucer passes not only for a great improver, but for the very Father and Founder of it; and it is not a little to his honour that amongst those who are of this opinion we may reckon one of the foundest of our criticks, and one of the correctest writers in our language. So wide the difference is be-

tween the narrow notions of false wits and the fair and candid judgments that are given by the true *!

We cannot close this life better than by giving a succinct detail of our Author's family, or, to speak with greater propriety, of his eldest son; for as to his second son Lewis we have no account in what station he lived, or where he died: but as to Thomas Chaucer, the office of Chief Butler to the King, granted to him in the last year of Richard II. was afterwards given him for life by letters patents from King Henry IV. and confirmed by Henry VI. In the 2d year of Henry IV. we find him Speaker of the House of Commons, Sheriff of Oxfordshire and of Berkshire, and Constable

* *And the fair and candid judgments that are given by the true.*] The first writer that ventured to fall upon our Author was himself more than half a foreigner, and very far from being correct with respect to sentiment or style. His very charge in the present case will prove what I have advanced: "The poet, Geoffrey Chaucer," says he, "writing his poesies in English, is of some called the first illuminator of the English tongue. Of their opinion I am not, though I reverence Chaucer as an excellent poet for his time. He was indeed a great mingler of English with French, unto which language (belike for that he was descended of French or rather Waloon race) he carried a great affection." But Dr. Skinner, in a very elegant Latin style, has attacked our Author with much more spirit and force; I shall give his words in English: "The poet Chaucer set the worst example, who by bringing whole shoals of French words into our language, which was but too much adulterated before through the effects of the Norman conquest, deprived it almost wholly of its native grace and splendour, laying on paint over its pure complexion, and for a beautiful face substituted a downright mask."

of Wallingford-Castle and of Knareborough-Castle during life. In the 4th year of the same reign the King directed an order to him, as Chief Butler, to deliver one hundred tons of wine to the Duke of Burgundy. In the 6th year of the same prince he was sent Ambassador into France; and the year following he went beyond the seas, joined in commission with the King's brother and Geoffrey Chaucer's nephew, Henry Beaufort Bishop of Winchester. In the 9th year of the same reign, on Tuesday the 25th of October, the Commons presented him their Speaker, as they did likewise in the 11th year, on Wednesday the 28th of January. In the 12th year of that reign Queen Jane granted to him, for his good service, the manors of Woodstock, Hannebrough, Wotton, and Stantesfield, during life; and in the 13th year, on the 5th of November, he was again presented Speaker, as he was in the 14th of Henry V. on Wednesday the second day of parliament; and in the same year he was sent by the King, in joint commission with Hugh Mortimer, to treat of a marriage with Catharine daughter to the Duke of Burgundy. He was likewise Ambassador in the 5th and 6th years of the same reign with Walter Hungerford, Steward of the Household, in the same affair; and again in the 6th year of the same reign he was Ambassador for peace with France; and he passed through several other publick stations, as appears by records. He resided chiefly at Ewelme in Oxfordshire,

which came to him by marriage, and there he died on the 28th of April 1434, and was buried in that parish church under a black marble tomb. By his wife Maud, or Matilda, who survived him two years, he had one daughter named Alice, who was thrice married, first to Sir John Philips Knight, and afterwards to Thomas Montacute Earl of Salisbury, who dying left her very rich. Her third husband was the famous William de la Pole, Earl and afterwards Duke of Suffolk, who was first secretly married to the Countess of Hainault, by whom he had one daughter, but procuring a divorce from her he married this Alice, by whom he had one son, John Duke of Suffolk. Duke William lived chiefly at Dunnington and Ewelme, at the first of which Stowe says he built an hospital; but he seems to mistake it for that founded by Adderbury, as before mentioned, for Dugdale takes no notice of any other, but at Ewelme he founded one called God's House. He was an instance of the danger of a prince's favour, and the envy that attends it; for influencing the notions and the will of his master Henry VI. too much, and abusing the power he had over that easy prince, he enraged the Commons to that degree that nothing less than his banishment could appease them, which being agreed to the Yorkists, fearful of his return, seized him on his passage in Dover-road, and cut off his head upon the side of a cock-boat, and his body was buried at the Charter-House at Hull. The

Duchefs survived him feveral years, and after an honourable life died at Ewelme in the year 1475. Their fon John had iffue, according to Leland, John Earl of Lincoln, Edmund afterwards Duke of Suffolk, Richard, William, and a fifth fon, who was a ſcholar in Gonvil-Hall in Cambridge. Edmund de la Pole, the laſt of that name Duke of Suffolk, for being in treaſon againſt Henry VII. for which he had been once pardoned, forfeited his life to the crown, and was beheaded in the 7th year of that king's reign, whereby the eſtates which Chaucer's family was poſſeſſed of came to the crown, and particularly the hoſpital of Ewelme, which was by King James I. beſtowed on the Phyſick Profeſſor at Oxford, who is always maſter thereof in virtue of his office.

(C) *An Abstract of the historical passages of the life of Chaucer, from Tyrwhitt's edit. 1775.*

THE birth of Chaucer in 1328 has been settled, I suppose, from some inscription on his tombstone, signifying that he died in 1400 at the age of seventy-two. Of his birth itself we have no memorial, any more than of his parents (a). He calls himself a *Londensis*, or Londoner, in The Test. of L. b. i. fol. 325, and in another passage, fol. 321, speaks of the city of London as the place of his *engendrure*.

We are more in the dark about the place of his education. In his Court of Love, ver. 912, he speaks of himself under the name and character of "Philoge-net—of Cambridge, Clerk." This is by no means a decisive proof that he was really educated at Cambridge, but it may be admitted, I think, as a strong

(a) Mr. Speght has referred to several records in which the name of Chaucer occurs. There is mention in the *Monast. Ang.* vol. iii. p. 326, of a Johannes le Chauser, *circa* Londonensis, an. 1299, who may possibly have been our poet's grandfather. Though Leland says that he was *nobili loco natus*, Mr. Speght informs us that "in the opinion of some heralds—he descended not of any great house, which they gather by his "armes." I am inclined to believe the heralds rather than Leland.—The name of Chaucer is explained [Life of Ch. Urr.] to signify a shoemaker, but it rather means *un faiseur de chausses ou culottiers*. Dict. de Lacombe, v. Chaucier. According to what is said to be the old spelling of it, Chaucer, it might be not improbably derived from *Chaufecire*, an office which still subsists under the title of Chafewax,

argument that he was not educated at Oxford, as Leland has supposed, without the shadow of a proof (*b*). The biographers however, instead of weighing one of these accounts against the other, have adopted both, and tell us very gravely that he was first at Cambridge, and afterwards removed from thence to complete his studies at Oxford.

It were to be wished that Mr. Speght had given us the date of that record in the Inner Temple (which he says a Mr. Buckley had seen) where "Geffrey Chaucer was fined two shillings for beating a Franciscan friar in Fleetstreet" (*c*). Leland has also told us that our Author "*collegia Leguleiorum frequentavit* after his

(*b*) The single circumstance by which Leland has endeavoured to strengthen his supposition that Chaucer was educated at Oxford is another supposition that he was born in Oxfordshire or Berkshire: the latter has been shewn above to be false.

(*c*) Though this be but a blind story, it rather inclines me to believe that Chaucer was of the Inner Temple in the early part of his life before he went into the service of Edward III. the circumstance recorded is plainly a youthful folly. On the contrary, Leland supposes his principal residence in the Inns of Court to have been after he had flourished in France, about the last years of Richard II. which is totally incredible. Indeed Leland, through his whole account of our Author, seems to have considered him as living at least twenty years later than he really did. He takes no notice of the best authenticated circumstances of Chaucer's life in the time of Edw. III. and he represents him as highly esteemed by Henry IV. and *his son, qui de Gallis triumphavit*. Henry V. was scarcely twelve years of age when Chaucer died.

"travels in France, and perhaps before." I must observe that these travels in France rest entirely upon the authority of Leland, whose account is full of inconsistencies.

The first authentick memorial which we have of Chaucer is the patent in Rymer, 4 E. III by which that king grants to him an annuity of 20 marks by the title of *Valettus noster* (d). He was then in the 39th year of his age. How long he had served the King in that or any other station, and what particular

(d) *Our yeoman.* Mr. Speght, who omits this grant, mentions one of the same purport in the 45 Edward III. in which Chaucer is styled *Valettus Hospitii*, which he translates—Grome of the palace. By this he links our Author as much too low as another writer has raised him too high, by translating the same words—Gentleman of the King's Privy Chamber. [Life of Ch. Urr.] Valet, or yeoman, was the intermediate rank between squier and grome. See the note on ver. 101. See also the Will of Edward Duke of York, *ap. Rymer, an.* 1415, where his legacies to his menial servants are thus arranged—a un esquier L s. a [un] vadlet XX s. a un gare [on . . .] & a un page VI s. VIII d.—*Valettus* is probably a corruption of *vassalletus*, the diminutive of *vassallus*; hence this title was also given (not as a name of service) to young men of the highest quality before they were knighted;

Il ot un fiz de sa molier,
Ki neit pas uncore chivaler,
Vallet esteit et beaus et gent.-----

Roman d'Ipomedon.

So that if Edward III. as Mr. Speght says, "did entitle Laurence Hastings Lord of Aburganey—*Valedum nostrum*," I should guess that the said lord was not "the king's grome, "page, or servant," (as he supposes) or his yeoman, (as Chaucer was) but his ward.

merits were rewarded by this royal bounty (e), are points equally unknown.

(e) I should have been glad to have met with any ground for supposing that this mark of royal favour was a reward of our Author's poetical merits. That Chaucer had before this time distinguished himself by his poetical performances is almost certain. I have mentioned a suspicion [n. on ver. 1920,] that *The Assemb. of Foules alludes* to the courtship of Blanche of Lancaster by John of Gaunt, who married her in 1359, the 33 year of E. III.; and perhaps *The Complaint of the Black Knight* might be written for John of Gaunt during the same courtship. It is still more probable that his translation of *The Roman de la Rose*, and his *Troilus*, were both composed before 1367, the era of which we are speaking: but I think if the King had really patronised Chaucer as a poet we must have found some clear evidence of such a connexion. If the one had been fond of verses the other would certainly have given him some, especially as he might have exerted his genius in the praise of so illustrious a patron without any necessity of flattering. If we consider further that a few years after the King appointed him to be Comptroller of the Custom of Wool, &c. in the port of London, with the following injunction in his patent—“so that the said Geoffrey write with his own hand his rolls touching the said office, and continually reside there, and do and execute all things pertaining to the said office in his own proper person, and not by his subllitude,”——we shall probably be of opinion that his Majesty was either totally insensible of our Author's poetical talents, or at least had no mind to encourage him in the cultivation or exercise of them. It should seem that Edward, though adorned with many royal and heroic virtues, had not the gift of discerning and patronising a great poet, a gift which, like that of genuine poetry, if we may believe one who perhaps spoke feelingly upon the subject is only bestowed on the chosen few by the peculiar favour of Heaven;

-----neque enim, nisi carus ab ortu
Dili superis, poterit magno favisse poetæ.

Milt. Manfuz.

From this time we find frequent mention of him in various publick instruments. In the 46 E. III. [*apud Rymer*] the King appoints him Envoy (with two others) to Genoa, by the title of *Scutifer noster* (*f*). In the 48 E. III. he has a grant for life of a pitcher of wine daily [*ap. Rymer*] and in the same year a grant, during pleasure, of the office of Comptroller of the Custom of Wools, &c. in the port of London [*ibid.*] In the 49 E. III. the King grants to him the Wardship of Sir Edmond Staplegate's heir [*msl. Rymer*, E. III. vol. xi. n. 12.] for which he received 114*l.* [*ibid.* R. II. vol. i. n. 16.] and in the next year some forfeited wool to the value of 71*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.* [*Life of Ch. Urr.*] In the last year of Edw. III. he was sent

I observe, however, that notwithstanding the petrifying quality with which these customhouse accounts might be expected to operate upon Chaucer's genius he probably wrote his House of Fame while he was in that office: I gather this from b. ii. ver. 144, where the Eagle says to him——

For when thy labour al done is,
And halt made all thy *rekenynges*,
In stede of rest and of newe thynges
Thou goest home to thyne house anone, &c.

(*f*) Our *squier*; so that in the course of these five years our Author had been promoted from the rank of yeoman to that of squier, attendant upon the King. *Scutifer* and *armiger*, Lat. are synonymous terms for the French *Escuier*. The biographers thinking, I suppose, the title of Squier too vulgar, have changed it into Shieldbearer, as if Chaucer had the special office of carrying the King's shield.——Some observations have been made upon this appointment of Chaucer as Envoy to Genoa in The Discourie, &c. n. 20.

to France with Sir Guichard D'Angle and Richard Stan, [or Sturry] to treat of a marriage between the Prince of Wales, Richard, and a daughter of the French king [Froissart, vol. i. chap. 325.]

In the next year, 1 R. II. his annuity of 20 marks was confirmed to him, and another annuity of 20 marks was granted to him in lieu of the pitcher of wine daily. [See the license to surrender these grants in the Life of Ch. Urr.] It is probable too that he was confirmed in his office of Comptroller, though the instrument has not been produced (*g*). In the 11 of R. II. he had the King's license to surrender his two grants of 20 marks each in favour of John Scalby (*b*).

(*g*) This is probable I think, because Chaucer in his Testament of Love frequently alludes to his loss of office as one of the greatest misfortunes brought upon him by his *meddling* in those disturbances which happened in the city of London in the 7 of R. II. When he fled to avoid being examined in relation to these disturbances (as he says, Test. of L. fol. 329, b.) he was probably superseded in his office.

(*b*) This license reciting the two grants is printed in the Life of Ch. Urr. and the author of that life has observed that this surrender was probably occasioned by our Author's distressed circumstances. Either he despaired of procuring payment of his pensions, or perhaps wanted to raise a sum of ready money. The same writer has extracted from The Test. of Love almost all that is now to be known of the history of this distress, which he ascribes very truly to Chaucer's unfortunate engagements with that party in the city of London of which John of Northampton was at the head. What the real designs of that party were, and how a trifling city-riot, as it seems to have been, came to be treated as a rebel-

In the 13 of R. II. he appears to have been Clerk of the Works at Westminster, &c. and in the following year at Windsor (i). In the 17 R. II. the King grant-

lion, are points of great obscurity. There is good ground to believe that Northampton was connected with the Duke of Lancaster. At his trial, in August 1384, he contended that he ought not to be tried in the absence of his lord the Duke: "Quo verbo," says Walsingham, p. 310. "fuscitavit suspicio-
nem finistram tam vulgi quam procerum contra Ducem." He was condemned however to perpetual imprisonment, in which he remained till July 1395, when (according to the Monk of Evesham, p. 122,) "ad instantiam Ducis Lancastrie, "Johannes Northampton—et socii sui nuper de Londoniis "hanniti, restituti sunt ad pristinas libertates," the judgment against him was reversed in parliament the next year, *Rot. Parl.* 14 R. II. n. 36, and he was restored to his lands, &c. the year following, *Rot. Parl.* 15 R. II. n. 33. This connexion of Northampton with the Duke of Lancaster will account for the part which Chaucer appears to have taken in this unhappy affair. He was very early attached to that duke, and was at this time married to a sister of Catharine Swynford the Duke's mistress; and it is observable that the first mark of royal favour which he received after his distresses was bestowed upon him at the same time that Northampton received his pardon, and probably through the same mediation.

(i) See *Tanner's Bib. Brit. v. Chaucer, n. e.* It may justly be doubted whether these two offices together indemnified our Author for the loss of his former office in the Customs; that was probably a very lucrative one. He complains of "being
"berafte out of dignitie of office, in which he made gatheringge
"of worldly godes;" and in another place he speaks of himself as "once glorious in worldly welshunesse, and having such
"godes in welthe as maken men riche." [Test. of Love, fol. 326, a. b.] But that he should ever have been possessed of lands and revenues to the yearly value almost of a thousand pounds (according to the tradition repeated by Mr. Speght) is quite incredible.

ed to him a new annuity of 20 *l.* [*ap. R.*] (*l*);—in the 21 his protection for two years [*ibid.*]—and in the 22 a pipe of wine annually [*ibid.*] In the next year, the 1 H. IV. his two grants of the annuity of 20 *l.* and of the pipe of wine, were confirmed to him [msf. *Rymer*, H. IV. vol. i. n. 27,] and at the same time he had an additional grant of an annuity of 40 marks, [*ibid.* n. 15.] He died, according to the inscription on his tombstone, in the beginning of the 2 H. IV. on the 25th of Oct. 1400.

These I think are the principal facts in Chaucer's life which are attested by authentick evidences (*l*).

(*l*) If Chaucer was ever possessed of Dunnington-Castle in Berkthire, (as his biographers suppose he was) he must have purchased it about this time, for it appears to have been in the possession of Sir Richard Adderbury in the 16th year of Rich. II. *Monst. Aug.* ii. 474. We have no proof of any such purchase, and the situation of his affairs makes it highly improbable. The tradition which Mr. Evelyn mentions in his *Sylva*, of an oak in Dunnington-park called Chaucer's oak, may be sufficiently accounted for without supposing that it was planted by Chaucer himself, as the Castle was undoubtedly in the hands of Thomas Chaucer for many years.

(*l*) It appears further from the *Exitus, Postb.* 4 R. II. [msf. *Rymer*, R. II. vol. ii. n. 3,] that Chaucer, on the 24 May 1381, received at the Exchequer a half year's payment of his own two annuities of 20 marks each, and also a half year's payment of an annuity of 10 marks, granted by E. III. and confirmed by R. II. to his wife Philippa, "*nuper uni domicellarum Philippæ, nuper Regina Angliæ.*" The title given to her of *domicella* proves that she was unmarried at the time of her being in the Queen's service. There is a patent in *Rymer*, 43 E. III. by which the King, about four months after Queen Philippa's

We learn from himself, in his Treatise on the Astro-
labe, that he had a son called Lewis, who was ten

death, grants annuities to nine of her *domicelle*, viz. to four of them 10 marks, to two 5 pounds, and to three 5 marks. One of them is called Philippa Pykard, and might very well be supposed to be the lady whom Chaucer afterwards married, if it were not for two objections, 1. that the annuity granted to her is only 5 pounds, whereas Chaucer's wife appears by this record to have had one of 10 marks; and, 2. that the historians, though they own themselves totally ignorant of the Christian name of Chaucer's wife, are all agreed that her surname was Rouet, the same with that of her father and eldest sister Catharine Swynford. The first objection might be got over by supposing that her annuity, though at first only 5 pounds, was increased (perhaps upon her marriage with Chaucer) to 10 marks. As to the other point, it is not impossible that the father and the eldest sister, who was his heiress, [See pat. 13 H. IV. p. 1. m. 35, *apud Rymer*] might bear the name of de Rouet (or de Roelt, as it is in the pat. 13 H. IV. just quoted) from some estate in their possession, and yet the younger sister might be called by the family-name of Pykard.— If the records of payments at the Exchequer for the eleven years preceding 1381 are still in being they may enable us to clear up these doubts, and also perhaps to ascertain very nearly the time of Chaucer's marriage, as they will probably shew when he began to receive his wife's annuity. If this last point were ascertained we should know better what to think of the relation of Thomas Chaucer to our Author. Mr. Speght informs us "that some held opinion that Thomas Chaucer was not the sonne of Geoffrey;" and there are certainly many circumstances which might incline us to that opinion. I was in hopes of meeting with some light upon this subject in a poem which Lydgate is said to have written, entitled "A Complaint upon the departure of Thomas Chaucer into France upon the Kynges Ambassate." A poem with this title is extant in *ms Harl.* 367. 33, in the handwriting of J. Stowe, but upon inspection I found it to be a mere love-ballad, without the least imaginable reference to Thomas Chaucer.

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years of age in 1391. It is the only circumstance, as I recollect, relating to his family of which he has informed us. A few other historical particulars relating to himself, which may be collected from his writings, have been taken notice of already; and perhaps a more attentive examination of his Works might furnish a few more. We must be cautious however, in such an examination, of supposing allusions which Chaucer never intended, or of arguing from pieces which he never wrote as if they were his. We must not infer, from his repeated commendations of the daisy-flower, that he was specially favoured by Margaret Countess of Pembroke (*m*); and still less should

(*m*) I can find no other foundation for this notion; Mr. Speght, who first started it, says that "it may appeare in divers treatises by him written, as in the Prologue of the Legend of Good Women under the name of the Dayie, and likewise in a ballad beginning, *In the season of February.*" The ballad is among the additions made by J. Stowe to Chaucer's Works in 1561, and, like the greatest part of those additions, is of very dubious authority, to use the gentlest terms: but supposing it genuine, there is nothing in it to make us believe that it had any reference to the Countess of Pembroke. That its commendations of the daisy ought not to weigh with us is very plain from the other piece cited by Mr. Speght; for The Legend of Good Women, in which he imagines the Lady Margaret to be honoured under the name of the Daisy, was certainly not written till at least twelve years after that lady's death. [See The Discourse, &c. n. 3. for the date of The Legend. The Countess Margaret must have died not later than 1370, as the earl's son by his second wife Anne was about nineteen years of age when he was killed in a tourna-

we set him down as a *follower* of Alain Chartier (n); because his editors have falsely ascribed to him a translation of one of Alain's poems.

ment in 1391. *Hollinshead*, p. 471.] It is possible that *le dit de la fleur de lis et de la Marguerite*, by Guillaume de Machaut, [*Acad. des Insc.* t. xx. p. 381.] and the *Dittie de la fleur de la Marguerite* by Froissart, [*ibid.* t. x. p. 669,] (neither of which had the least relation to the Countess of Pembroke) might furnish us with the true key to those mystical compliments which our poet has paid to the daisy-flower.

(n) Leland was the first author of this story, which is totally inconsistent with chronology. The time of Alain's birth has not been settled with precision, but he was certainly living near 40 years after Chaucer's death, which makes it morally impossible that the latter should have *followed* him in his attempts to polish his native language. Instead therefore of supposing, from the translation of *La belle Dame sans Merci*, that Chaucer *imitated* Alain Chartier, we should rather conclude that he was not the *author* of that translation, which indeed in *ms. Harl.* 372 is expressly attributed to a Sir Richard Ros. — I will just take notice of another opinion, (which has been propagated upon as little foundation) that Chaucer *imitated* the Provençal poets. Mr. Rymer, who I believe first made the discovery, speaks only of his having *borrowed* from their language, [*View of Trag.* p. 70,] but Mr. Dryden found out that he *composed after their manner*, particularly his tale of *The Flower and the Leaf*, [*Pref. to Fables.*] Mr. Warton also thinks that *The House of Fame* was originally a Provençal composition, *Hist. of Eng. Po.* p. 389, 458. — How far Chaucer's language was *borrowed* has been considered already in the Essay, &c. part i. I will only add here that I have not observed in any of his writings a single phrase or word which has the least appearance of having been *fetched* by him from the south of the Loire. With respect to the *manner* and *matter* of his compositions, till some clear instance of *imitation* be produced I shall be slow to believe that in either he ever *copied* the poets of Provence, with whose works I apprehend he had very little if any acquaintance.

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PREFACE

To Mr. Tyrwhitt's edition of The Canterbury Tales.

THE first object of this publication was to give the text of *The Canterbury Tales* as correct as the mss. within the reach of the editor would enable him to make it.

The account of former editions in the Appendix to this Preface (*A*) will shew that this object had hitherto been either entirely neglected, or at least very imperfectly pursued: the editor therefore has proceeded as if his Author had never been published before: he has formed the text throughout from the mss. and has paid little regard to the readings of any edition except the two by Caxton, each of which may now be considered as a manuscript. A list of the mss. collated or consulted upon this occasion is subjoined (*B*).

In order to make the proper use of these mss. to unravel the confusions of their orthography, and to judge between a great number of various readings, it was necessary to inquire into the state of our language and versification at the time when Chaucer wrote, and also, as much as was possible, into the peculiarities of his style and manner of composition; nor was it less necessary to examine with some attention the work now intended to be republished, to draw a line between the imperfections which may be supposed to have been left in it by the Author, and those which have crept into it since, to distinguish the parts where the Author appears as an inventor from those where he is merely a translator or imitator, and throughout the whole to trace his allusions to a variety of forgotten books and obsolete customs.

As a certain degree of information upon all these points will be found to be necessary even for the reading of *The Canterbury Tales* with intelligence and satisfaction, the editor hopes he shall be excused for supposing that the majority of his readers will not be displeased with his attempt to shorten at least the labour of their inquiries, by laying before them such parts of the result of his own researches as he judges will be most conducive to that purpose; he has therefore added to the text, 1. An Essay on the Language and Versification of Chaucer *; 2. An Introductory Discourse to *The Canterbury Tales*; and, 3. Notes, into which he has thrown an account of the most material various readings, illustrations of particular passages, and explanations of the most uncommon words and phrases, especially such as are omitted or ill explained in the Glossary to Urry's edition.

He had once an intention of adding a glossary and a life of Chaucer: from the former of these undertakings he was deterred † by the bulk to which this publication had already swollen, and by the consideration that a glossary adapted to a part only of Chaucer's writings must necessarily be a very imperfect work, the utility of which would by no means

* In this Essay is contained a short view of English poetry to the time of Chaucer, the trouble of compiling which the editor might perhaps have saved himself if he had foreseen that Mr. Warton's History of English Poetry would have appeared so soon. Both the Essay and the Introductory Discourse were printed before Mr. Warton's book was published, which is mentioned not so much to obviate any suspicion of plagiarism as to apologize for whatever defects there may be in either of those treatises from a want of the lights which that learned and elegant writer has thrown upon all parts of this subject.

† This Glossary has since been published. See vol. xiv.

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be proportionable to the labour employed in compiling it. If this attempt to invite the attention of the publick to their too much neglected bard should so far succeed as to bring to light any mss. by the help of which, together with those in the Bodleian and other libraries, the remainder of the writings of Chaucer might be restored to a tolerable degree of purity, a good glossary to the whole would be a most useful work, and indeed would answer all the purposes of a dictionary of our ancient language.

With respect to a life of Chaucer he found, after a reasonable waste of time and pains in searching for materials, that he could add few *facts* to those which have already appeared in several lives of that poet; and he was not disposed either to repeat the comments and inventions by which former biographers have endeavoured to supply the deficiency of facts, or to substitute any of his own for the same laudable purpose: instead therefore of a formal life of his Author, which upon these principles must have been a very meagre narration, he has added to this Preface a short Abstract of the Historical Passages of the Life of Chaucer with remarks *, which may serve to separate for the future those passages from others which have nothing to recommend them to credit but the single circumstance of having been often repeated.

He will detain the reader no longer than just to desire his indulgence for the errata which are specified in the annexed table: those of the printer are distinguished by Italicks; of the rest the editor must take the shame to himself: they are owing partly to his having omitted to insert the true readings in the

* See this vol. page 66—76.

copy prepared for the press, and partly to his having imprudently adopted some less authorized readings, and even conjectures, instead of the readings of the best mss. When the passages here pointed out are corrected he does not recollect to have deviated from the mss. (except perhaps by adding the final *n* to a very few words) in any one instance of which the reader is not advertised in the notes.

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(A) APPENDIX TO PRECEDING PREFACE.

An account of former editions of The Canterbury Tales.

THE art of printing had been invented and exercised for a considerable time in most countries of Europe before the art of criticism was called in to superintend and direct its operations; it is therefore much more to the honour of our meritorious countryman, William Caxton, that he chose to make *The Canterbury Tales* one of the earliest productions of his press, than it can be to his discredit that he printed them very incorrectly. He probably took the first ms. that he could procure to print from, and it happened unluckily to be one of the worst in all respects that he could possibly have met with. The very few copies of this edition which are now remaining (a) have no date, but Mr. Ames supposes it to have been printed in 1475 or 1476.

It is still more to the honour of Caxton that when he was informed of the imperfections of his edition he very readily undertook a second, "for to satisfy the Auctour," (as he says himself) "where as tofore by ygnoraunce *be* had erryd in hurtyng and dysfamyng his book." His whole account of this matter, in the Preface to this second edition, is so clear and ingenuous that I shall insert it below in his own words (b). This edition is also without date, except

(a) The late Mr. West was so obliging as to lend me a complete copy of this edition, which is now, as I have heard, in the King's library. There is another complete copy in the library of Merton College, which is illuminated, and has a ruled line under every printed one, to give it the appearance, I suppose, of a ms. Neither of those books, though seemingly complete, has any preface or advertisement.

(b) Pref. to Caxton's 2d edit. from a copy in the library of

that the Preface informs us that it was printed six years after the first.

St. John's Col. Oxford, p. *Ames*, 55.—“Whiche book I have
 “dyligently overfen, and duly examyned to the ende that it
 “be made accordyng unto his owen makyn; for I fynde many
 “of the fayd bookes, whiche wryters have abyrdgyd it, and
 “many thynges left out, and in fome places have sette certayn
 “verfys that he never made ne sette in hys booke; of whiche
 “bookes fo incorrekte was one broughte to me vi. yere paffyd
 “whiche I fupposed had ben veray true and correkte, and ac-
 “cordyng to the fame I dyde do enprynte a certayn number
 “of them, whiche anon were folde to many and dyverfe gen-
 “tlymen, of whom one gentylman cam to me, and fayd that
 “this book was not accordyng in many places unto the book
 “that Gefferey Chaucer had made; to whom I answered,
 “that I had made it accordyng to my cotype, and by me was
 “nothyng added ne mynusthyd. Thenne he fayd, he knewe
 “a book whyche hys fader had and moche lovdy, that was
 “very trewe, and accordyng unto hys owen first book by hym
 “made; and fayd more, yf I wold enprynte it agayn he wold
 “gete me the same book for a cotype, how be it he wyll well
 “that hys fader wold not gladly departe fro it. To whom I
 “fayd, in caasthat he coude gete me fuche a book, trewe and
 “correkte, yet I wold ones endevoyre me to enprynte it agayn,
 “for to fatisfy the Aufour, where as tofore by ygnoraunce I
 “erryd in hurtyng and dyffamyng his book in dyverce places,
 “in fettyng in foume thynges that he never fayd ne made, and
 “levyng out many thynges that he made, whiche ben requy-
 “fite to be sette in it. And thus we fyll at accord, and he full
 “gentlyly gate of hys fader the said book, and delyvered it to
 “me, by whiche I have corrected my book, as heere after alle
 “alonge by the ayde of almighty God fhall folowe, whom I hum-
 “bly befeche,” &c.—Mr. Lewis, in his *Life of Caxton*, p. 104,
 has published a minute account of the contents of this edition
 from a copy in the library of Magdalen College Cambridge, but
 without deciding whether it is the first or the second edition—
 it is undoubtedly the second, but the Preface is loft. There is
 an imperfect copy of this edition in the Mufeum, and another

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Ames mentions an edition of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales collected by William Caxton, and printed by Wynken de Worde at Westmestre in 1495, folio. He does not appear to have seen it himself, nor have I ever met with any other authority for its existence, which however I do not mean to dispute: if there was such an edition we may be tolerably sure that it was only a copy of Caxton's.

This was certainly the case of both Pynson's editions: he has prefixed to both the introductory part of Caxton's prohemie to his second edition without the least alteration. In what follows he says that he purposes to imprint his book [in the first edition] "by a copy of the said Master Caxton," and [in the second] "by a copy of William Caxton's imprinting" (c). That the copy mentioned in both these passages, by which Pynson purposed to imprint, was really Caxton's second edition, is evident from the slightest comparison of the three books. Pynson's first edition has no date, but is supposed (upon good grounds I think) to have been printed not long after 1491, the year of Caxton's death: his second edition (d) is dated in 1526, and was the first in which

in the library of the Royal Society: both together would not make a complete one.

(c) See the prohemies to Pynson's 1st and 2d edit. In the Preface to Urry's Chaucer. There is a complete copy of Pynson's 1st edit. in the library of the Royal Society.

(d) I venture to call this Pynson's 2d edit. though Ames (from some notes of Bagford) speaks of editions in 1520 and 1522. He does not appear to have seen them himself. Mr. West had a copy of the edition of 1526, in which the name of the printer and the date of the impression are regularly set down at the end of The Canterbury Tales; after that follow *Troilus and Criseide* and *The Beke of Fame*, at the end of which last

LXXXIV ACCOUNT OF FORMER EDIT. CANT. TALES.

a collection of some other pieces of Chaucer was added to The Canterbury Tales.

The next edition which I have been able to meet with was printed by Thomas Godfray in 1532. If this be not the very edition which Leland speaks of as printed by Berthelette (e), with the assistance of

is a note copied from Caxton's edition of the same book, with this addition, "and here followeth another of his workes;" but in Mr. West's copy nothing followed. The writer of the Preface to ed. Urr. seems to have had the use of a copy of this edition in 1526, which contained some other pieces of Chaucer's, and several by other hands. See the Pref. to ed. Urr.

(e) I think it necessary to state Leland's account of the editions of Chaucer in his own words, from Tanner's *Bibl. Brit. v. Chaucer*. Non alienum meo erit instituto palam facere, *Gulielmum Caxodunum*, hominem nec indiligentem nec indoctum, et quem constat primum Londini artem exercuisse typographicam, *Chauceri opera*, quotquot vel pretio vel precibus comparare potuit, in unum volumen colligisse. Vicit tamen Caxodunicam editionem *Bertheletus* noster operâ *Gulielmi Thynni*, qui multo labore, sedulitate, ac curâ usus in perquirendis vetustis exemplaribus, multa primæ adjecit editioni. Sed nec in hac parte caruit *Brianus Tucca*, mihi familiaritate conjunctissimus, et Anglicæ linguæ eloquentiâ mirificus, suâ gloriâ, editâ in postremam impressionem præfatione climatâ, luculentâ, elegantî. Sequar igitur codicem paucis abhinc annis impressum, et promissum adponam syllabon. He then gives a syllabus of the Works of Chaucer contained in that edition, as follows: *Fabulæ Cantianæ* xxiv, quarum duæ solutâ oratione scriptæ; sed *Petri Aratoris fabula*, quæ communi doctorum consensu Chaucero, tanquam vero parenti, attribuitur, in utrâque editione, quia malos sacerdotum mores vehementer increpavit, suppressa est. *De arte amandi*, alias *Romaunce of the Rose*, &c.—Before I make any remarks upon this account I must observe that it was drawn up by Leland before the year 1540: this appears from his New-Year's-Gift to Henry VIII. in the xxxvii year of his raygne, (1 Jan. 1546,) in which he says expressly

Mr. William Thynne, (as I rather suspect it is) we may be assured that it was copied from that. Mr.

that he had spent the last six years in travelling about the kingdom, "all his other occupations intermitted," [edit. 1745, p. 22, prefixed to Leland's Itin. v. i.] so that his book *De Viris Illustribus*, which he speaks of as finished in the same piece, p. 21, must have been finished before he set out upon his travels. I will observe too, by the way, that the biographers of Leland seem to have confounded these last six years travels with his former travels in execution of the commission granted to him by Henry VIII. to search the libraries of monasteries, colleges, &c. That commission was granted in the year 1533, 23 H. VIII. but how many years he spent in the execution of it there is no authority that I can find for determining with precision.—In the account above-quoted Leland is certainly mistaken in saying that Caxton collected the Works of Chaucer into one volume. He printed two editions of The Canterbury Tales by themselves, as has been shewn above; he also printed Boethius, Troilus and Cressida, and The Book of Fame, but each in a separate volume, and some smaller pieces of Chaucer, intermixed with several of Lydgate, &c. in another volume, of which the contents may be seen in Middleton's Dissert. p. 263, n. d; but it does not appear that he ever attempted to collect these separate publications into one volume.—Leland is also inaccurate, at least in representing the edition by Thynne as coming next after that by Caxton, without taking any notice of the intermediate editions by Pynson, and especially that in 1526, in which an attempt was really made to collect the Works of Chaucer into one volume.—It may appear presumptuous to go further, and to charge him with inaccuracy in his description of that very edition by Thynne which he seems to have had before his eyes, but I am much inclined to suspect (as I have intimated in the text) that the edition which he speaks of as printed by Berthelette was really printed by Godfray, and that the Preface of Brianus Tuca (Sir Brian Tuke) which he commends so much, was nothing else but the prefatory address or dedication to the

Thynne's Dedication to Henry VIII. stands at the head of it, and the great number of Chaucer's Works,

King, which is prefixed to Godfray's and other later editions in the name of Mr. William Thynne. The mistake may not have been so extravagant as it appears to be at first. It is possible that Berthelette might be concerned in putting forth the edition of 1532 though it was printed by Godfray; and it is very probable that the Dedication, (which is in such a style as I think very likely to be commended by Leland) though standing in the name of Mr. William Thynne, was composed for him by Sir Brian Tuke. Mr. Thynne himself, I apprehend, was rather a lover than a master of these studies.—In support of this suspicion I observe first, that the syllabus which Leland has given of the contents of Berthelette's edition agrees exactly enough with the contents of the edition by Godfray, a few small pieces only being omitted by him. Second, the date of Godfray's edition in 1532 agrees perfectly with what Leland says of the edition in question, (*viz.* that it was printed *a few years before*) and with the probable date of Mr. Thynne's edition, which appears to have been published not earlier than 1530, and certainly not later than 1532. It was not published earlier than 1530, because *the French Grammar made by an Englishman*, mentioned in the Dedication, must mean, in all probability, *L'esclaircissement de la langue Francoise* by John Palsgrave, the printing of which was finished by John Hawkins 18 July 1530, and the privilege granted on the 2 September following. It was not later than 1532, because the Dedication appears in Godfray's edition of that year. Third, if Berthelette had printed Mr. Thynne's edit. 1531, (we will suppose) it is inconceivable that Godfray should set about another edition so immediately as to be able to publish it the very next year. Though the printers of that age had a very imperfect notion, I apprehend, of copyright at Common Law, they may be presumed to have had always a certain common sense which would restrain them from undertaking a new impression of a book while a considerable number of copies of a former impression remained

never before published, which appear in it, fully entitles it to the commendations which have always

unfold, whether these copies belonged to themselves or to others. Besides, Godfray's edition has no appearance of a hasty piratical impression; it is upon a fine paper, and the types and press-work are remarkably neat and elegant. Fourth, I think we have Berthelette's own authority for believing that he did not print Mr. Thynne's edit. of Chaucer. In the Preface to Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, which he published in this very year 1532, after having mentioned Troilus and Creside, he goes on thus; "The whiche noble warke, and many other of the sayde "Chaufer's that never were before imprinted, and those that "very fewe men knewe and fewer hadde them, be now of late "put forthe together in a sayre volume." There can be no doubt that in this passage he refers to Mr. Thynne's edit. and if he had printed it himself I think he would certainly have claimed the honour of it. At the same time the favourable manner in which he speaks of it, would lead one to imagine (as has been suggested above) that he had some concern in it. — Upon the whole, therefore, I am persuaded that the edit. by Godfray in 1532 is the edition which Leland speaks of as printed by Berthelette. I have given above what I conjecture to have been the probable grounds of his mistake. But indeed when we recollect the hurry in which this work of Leland must have been compiled, and that it was left by him unfinished, we need not seek for any other causes of the inaccuracies with which it abounds. In the latter part of the passage cited above he speaks of The Ploughman's Tale by the title of *Petri Aratoris Fabula*, confounding it, in the title at least, with Pierce Ploughman's Vision; for I do not suppose that he meant to attribute the Vision to Chaucer, though in fact the one might as well be attributed to him as the other. — Notwithstanding the immoderate length of this note I must not suppress another testimony which may be produced in favour of the existence of an edition of Chaucer by Mr. Thynne distinct from that printed by Godfray. Mr. Speght in his Life of Chaucer has the following passage; "M. William Thynne, in his first printed booke of Chaucer's

been given to Mr. Thynne's edition on that account. Accordingly it was several times reprinted as the

"Works with one columbe on a side, had a tale called 'The Pilgrim's Tale, which was more odious to the clergie than the speech of the Ploughman. The tale began thus, *In Lincolnshire fast by a fenne—Standeth a religious house, who doth it kenne.* The argument of which tale, as also the occasion thereof, and the cause why it was left out of Chaucer's Works, shall hereafter be shewed, if God permit, in M. Fran. Thynne's Comment upon Ch. and the tale itselfe published, *if possibly it can be found.*"—It must be allowed that this description of Mr. Thynne's first edition, "with one columbe on a side, and a tale called *The Pilgrim's Tale,*" does not suit the edition printed by Godfray, which is in two columns, and has no Pilgrim's tale: but I observe that Mr. Speght does not pretend to have seen this book; he even doubts whether the tale *can be found.* If therefore I should be able to prove that the tale which he speaks of could not possibly be in Mr. Thynne's first edition, I presume no great stress will be laid upon the other part of his evidence, in which he supposes that edition to have been printed with only one column on a side.—It appears very strange at first sight that The Ploughman's Tale (according to Leland) should have been suppressed in Mr. Thynne's edit. *quia malos sacerdotum mores vehementer increpavit*, and that he should have inserted this Pilgrim's Tale, which as Mr. Speght tells us was still *more odious to the clergie.* A few years after, when the reformation was further advanced, in 1542, The Ploughman's Tale is inserted among Chaucer's Works and The Pilgrim's Tale is suppressed! But there is no occasion to insist upon these little improbabilities. Though Mr. Speght did not know where to find The Pilgrim's Tale, and the printer of the edit. in 1687 assures us that he had searched for it "in the publick libraries of both Universities," and also "in all private libraries that he could have access unto," I have had the good fortune to meet with a copy *; it is entitled *The Pylgrymfe Tale*, and begins thus;

* The copy of which I speak is in the black letter, and seems to have once made part of a volume of miscellaneous poems in 8vo. The first

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standard edition of Chaucer's Works, without any material alteration, except the insertion of The Plough-

In Lincolneshyr, fast by the sene,
Ther stant an hows, and you yt ken,
And callyd Sempynham of religion,
And is of an old foundation, &c.

There can be no doubt, I think, that this is the piece of which Mr. Speght had received some confused intelligence: it seems to have been mentioned by Bale among Chaucer's Works in the following manner, *Narrationes diversorum, lib. i. In comitatu Lincolnensi fuit*—*Script. Brit. p. 526, edit. 1559.* But it is impossible that any one who had read it should ascribe it to Chaucer; he is quoted in it twice by name, fol. 33, and fol. 45, and in the latter place the reference seems to be made to a printed book. The reader shall judge—

He sayd he durst not it disclose,
But bad me reyd The Romant of the Rose,
The thred leafe just from the end,
To the second page ther he did me send,
He prayd me thes vi flavis for to make,
Whiche be Chaucer's awn hand warke.
¶ Thus moche wold our boke sygnify
That while Peter hath mastery, &c.

[Then follow four more lines from Chaucer's R.R. v. 7263—8, *ed. Urr.*] It is not usual, at least, to cite mss. by *the leafe* and *the page*. But if this citation was really made from a printed book The Pilgrim's Tale must have been written after Mr. Thynne's edition, for Chaucer's translation of The Romant of the Rose was first printed in that edition. Another passage will fix the date of this composition still more clearly. In fol. 39, 40, are the following lines;

leafs numbered xxxi, and the last xlv. The Pilgrim's Tale begins about the middle of fol. xxxi. and continues to the end of the fragment, where it breaks off imperfect. The first leaf has a running title—*Venus The Gourt uf*—and contains the ten last lines of one poem, and another whole poem of twenty lines, before The Pilgrim's Tale.—This curious fragment was purchased at the auction of Mr. West's library, in a lot (NO *1040) of *undry fragments of old black-letter books*, by Mr. Herbert of Guilson's Square, who very obligingly permitted me to examine it.

man's Tale in 1542, of which I have spoken in the Discourse, &c. n. 32.

As my business here is solely with The Canterbury Tales, I shall take no notice of the several miscellaneous pieces by Chaucer and others which were added to them by Mr. Thynne in his edition, and afterwards by Stowe and Speght in the editions of 1561, 1597, and 1602. With respect to The Canterbury Tales, I am under a necessity of observing that upon the whole they received no advantage from the edit. of 1532: its material variations from Caxton's second edition are all I think for the worse: it confounds the order of The Squier's (*f*) and The Frankeleyn's (*g*) Tales, which Caxton in his second edition had set right: it gives The Frankeleyn's Prologue to the Merchant, in addition to its own proper Prologue (*b*): it produces for the first time two Prologues, the one to The Doctour's, and the other to The Shipman's Tale, which are both evidently spurious (*i*); and it brings back the lines of ribaldry (*k*)

Perkin Werke and Jak Straw,
And now of late *our cobbler* the dawe.

One would not expect to find any mention of Perkin Warbeck in a work attributed to Chaucer; but passing that over, I think it is plain that *our cobbler*, in the second line, means the leader of the Lincolnshire rebels in 1536, who, as Hollinshed tells us, page 941, "called himself *Captaine Cobbler*, but was indeed a monk named Doctor Mackarell." The Pilgrim's Tale therefore was not written till *after* 1536, and consequently could not possibly be in Mr. Thynne's first edit. which, as has been shewn above, was printed *at latest* in 1532.

(*f*) See the Discourse, &c. § 23, and note on ver. 10293.

(*g*) *Ibid.* § 25, and note on ver. 10985.

(*b*) See the same section and note.

(*i*) See them in all the edit. since 1532.

(*k*) See the note on ver. 10227. The lines themselves are in all the common editions.

in The Merchant's Tale which Caxton in his second edition had rejected upon the authority of his good manuscript.

However, this edition of 1532, with all its imperfections, had the luck, as I have said, to be considered as the standard edition, and to be copied not only by the booksellers in their several edits. (*l*) of 1542, 1546, 1555, and 1561, but also by Mr. Speght (the first editor in form after Mr. Thynne who set his name to his work) in 1597 and 1602. In the Dedicat. to Sir Robert Cecil, prefixed to this last edition, he speaks indeed of having "reformed the whole work, both by old written copies and by Ma. William Thynne's praiseworthy labours;" but I cannot find that he has departed in any material point from those editions which I have supposed to be derived from Mr. Thynne's; in the very material points above-mentioned, in which those edits. vary from Caxton's second, he has followed *them*: nor have I observed any such verbal varieties as would induce one to believe that he had consulted any good ms. They who have read his Preface will probably not regret that he did not do more towards correcting the text of Chaucer.

In this state The Canterbury Tales remained (*m*)

(*l*) There are some other editions mentioned by Ames without date, but it is probable that upon inspection they would appear to be one or other of the editions whose dates are here given. It seems to have been usual to print books in partnership, and for each partner to print his own name to his share of the impression. See *Ames*, p. 252. A Bible is said to be printed in 1551 by Nicholas Hill—"at the cost and charges of certayne honest menne of the occupacyon, whose names be upon their booke."

(*m*) It may be proper just to take notice that Mr. Speght's edit. was reprinted in 1637, with an advertisement at the end,

till the edition undertaken by Mr. Urry, which was published some years after his death in 1721. I shall say but little of that edition, as a very fair and full account of it is to be seen in the modest and sensible Preface prefixed to it by Mr. Timothy Thomas (*n*), upon whom the charge of publishing Chaucer devolved, or rather was imposed, after Mr. Urry's death. The strange license in which Mr. Urry appears to have indulged himself of lengthening and shortening Chaucer's words according to his own fancy, and of even adding words of his own, without giving his readers the least notice, has made the text of Chaucer in his edition by far the worst that was ever published.

in which the editor pretended to publish from a ms. *the conclusion of The Cook's Tale, and also of The Squire's Tale, which in the printed books are said to be lost, or never finished by the Author.*—These conclusions may be seen in the Preface to ed. Urry. Whoever the editor was I must do him the justice to say that they are both really to be found in ms. The first is ms. B. α. and the other in ms. B. δ. from which Hearne has also printed it, as a choice discovery, in his letter to Bagford, *App. to R. G.* page 601. If I thought the reader had any relish for such supplements to Chaucer I could treat him from ms. B. α. with at least thirty more lines, which have been inserted in different parts of *The Cook's Tale* by the same hand that wrote this conclusion. It seems to have been an early though very unsuccessful attempt to supply the deficiencies of that tale before any one had thought of tacking Gamelyn to it.

(*n*) I learn this from a ms. note in an interleaved copy of Urry's Chaucer presented to the British Museum by Mr. William Thomas, a brother, as I apprehend, of Mr. T. Thomas. T. Thomas was of Christ-Church Oxford, and died in 1751, aged fifty-nine. In another note Mr. W. Thomas informs us that the *Life of Chaucer* in that edition was very uncorrectly

Since this there has been no complete edition of The Canterbury Tales. A volume in 8vo, containing the Prologue and The Knight's Tale, with large explanatory notes, &c. was published in 1737 by a gentleman (as I am informed) who has since distinguished himself by many other learned and useful publications. He appears to have set out upon the only rational plan of publishing Chaucer, by collating the best mss. and selecting from them the genuine readings; and accordingly his edition, as far as it goes, is infinitely preferable to any of those which preceded it.

drawn up by Mr. Dart, and corrected and enlarged by W. T. (i. e. himself.) The same Mr. W. Thomas has taken a great deal of unnecessary pains in collating that copy of Urry's edit. with several mss. The best part of the various readings serves only to correct the arbitrary innovations which Mr. Urry had introduced into the text. He has employed himself to better purpose upon the glossary, where he has made many emendations and additions which may be of considerable use if ever a new glossary to Chaucer shall be compiled.

AN ESSAY

ON THE LANGUAGE AND VERSIFICATION OF CHAUCER.

The Contents.

Introduction. The different judgments of the Language and Versification of Chaucer stated. Plan of this Essay in three parts. 1. To vindicate Chaucer from the charge of having corrupted the English Language by too great a mixture of French with it. 2. To make some observations upon the real state of our Language in his time. 3. To apply those observations and others towards illustrating the real nature of his Versification.

Part the first. The French Language introduced into England before the conquest, § 1.; confirmed and propagated by the new establishments at the conquest, § 2.; was the ordinary Language of the court, § 3.; was carried into the provinces by the great barons and military commanders, § 4.; and especially by the clergy, § 5.; who both secular and regular were chiefly foreigners, § 6.; the French Language continued to be much used as late as the reign of Edward III. § 7.; conclusion, that the mixture of French in Chaucer's writings was not owing to any affectation of his, but to the causes above-mentioned, which in his time had generally introduced the Norman-Saxon instead of the Saxon dialect, the same mixture being observable in other contemporary authors, § 8.

Part the second. The proposed observations upon the English Language confined to the actual state of it in the time of Chaucer, § 1.; and divided so as to consider separately the Saxon and Norman parts of it, § 2.; the Saxon part considered in grammatical order: 1. The prepositive article. 2. Nouns substantive and adjective. 3. Pronouns. 4. Verbs and participles. 5. The indeclinable parts of speech, § 3. The Norman part considered generally, § 4.; and more particularly with respect to nouns substantive and adjective, verbs and participles, § 5.; additional causes of the introduction of a great number of French terms in the English Language, § 6.

Part the third. Preliminary observations upon English poetry. The form of English poetry probably borrowed from the Normans, there being no traces of rhyme or metre among the Saxons before the conquest. The metres and rhyme of modern poetry derived from the Latin, § 1.; progress of English poetry to the reign of Henry II.; early attempts at rhyming, § 2. Few English poets known between the reign of Henry II. and that of Henry III. § 3. The *Ormulum* written in verses of fifteen syllables without rhyme, § 4. The number of rhymers increased between the last mentioned period and the time when Chaucer began to write, § 5. State of our poetry at that time, § 6. Account of the metres then in use, § 7.; of those used by Chaucer, § 8. The heroic metre probably introduced by him either from France or

Italy, § 9. A knowledge of the ancient pronunciation of our Language necessary in order to form a judgment of the Versification of Chaucer, § 10. How a critick in the age of Augustus would have proceeded in judging of the metre of Ennius, § 11. The same method recommended with respect to Chaucer. General reasons for believing that he understood and practised the ordinary rules of metre, § 12. The offences against metre in an English verse enumerated, as arising from 1. a superfluity, 2. a deficiency of syllables, and 3. a misplacing of accents, § 13. No *superfluity* of syllables in Chaucer's verses, § 14. The seeming *deficiencies* in his metre may generally be supplied by restoring the ancient pronunciation of certain syllables, § 15; and especially of the *feminine*. Reasons for believing that the final *e* in our ancient Language was pronounced like the *e* feminine of the French, § 16. The third kind of irregularity, arising from a *misplacing of accents*, may be rectified, in many instances, by accenting certain words in a manner different from that now in use, and more agreeable to the French practice. Proofs that such a mode of accentuation was used by Chaucer in words of Saxon as well as of French original. The early poets in France and Italy not exact in the disposition of their accents, § 17. Illustration of the foregoing theory by a grammatical and metrical analysis of the first eighteen lines of *The Canterbury Tales*, § 18.

AN ESSAY, &c.

THE Language of Chaucer has undergone two very different judgments. According to one (1) he is the "well of English undefiled;" according to the other he has corrupted and deformed the English idiom by an immoderate mixture of French words (2). Nor do

(1) Spenser, F. Q. b. IV. c. ii. st. 32.

(2) Veritegan, c. 7. "Some few ages after [the conquest] came the poet Geoffrey Chaucer, who writing his poesies in English is of some called the first illuminator of the English tongue. Of their opinion I am not, though I reverence Chaucer as an excellent poet for his time. He was indeed a *great mingler of English with French*, unto which language (belike for that he was descended of French or rather Waloon race) he carried a great affection."

Skinner, Etymol. L. A. Præf. "Ex hoc malefano novitatis pruritu, Belgæ Gallicas voces passim civitate sua donando patris sermonis puritatem nuper non leviter inquinârunt, et

the opinions with respect to his Versification seem to have been less discordant. His contemporaries (3), and they who lived nearest to his time, universally extol him as the "chief poet of Britaine," "the flour of poetes," &c. titles which must be supposed to imply their admiration of his metrical skill as well as of his other poetical talents; but the later criticks (4), though they leave him in possession of the same sounding titles, yet they are almost unani-

"Chaucerus poeta, pessimo exemplo, integris vocum plaustris
 "ex eadem Gallia in nostram linguam inuestis, eam, nimis antea
 "a Normannorum victoria adulteratam, omni fere nativa
 "gratia et nitore spoliavit."

(3) Lydgate, Oceleve, &c. See the Testimonies prefixed to this volume.

(4) I shall only quote Dryden, Pref. to his Fables. "The verse of Chaucer, I confess, is not harmonious to us—They who lived with him, and some time after him, thought it musical, and it continues so even in our judgment, if compared with the numbers of Lydgate and Gower, his contemporaries.—It is true I cannot go so far as he who published the last edition of him, [Mr. Speght,] for he would make us believe the fault is in our ears, and that there were really ten syllables in a verse where we find but nine: but this opinion is not worth confuting; it is so gross and obvious an error that common sense (which is a rule in every thing but matters of faith and revelation) must convince the reader that equality of numbers in every verse which we call Heroick was either not known or not always practised in Chaucer's age. It were an easy matter to produce some thousands of his verses which are lame for want of half a foot, and sometimes a whole one, and which no pronunciation can make otherwise."—This preceptory decision has never since (that I know) been controverted, except by Mr. Urry, whose design of restoring the metre of Chaucer by a collation of mss. was as laudable as his execution of it has certainly been unsuccessful.

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monly agreed that he was either totally ignorant or negligent of metrical rules, and that his verses (if they may be so called) are frequently deficient by a syllable or two of their just measure.

It is the purpose of the following Essay to throw some light upon both these questions. Admitting the fact that the English of Chaucer has a great mixture of French in it, I hope to shew that this mixture (if a crime) cannot fairly be laid to his charge: I shall then proceed to state some observations upon the most material peculiarities of the Norman-Saxon or English Language, as it appears to have been in general use in the age of Chaucer; and, lastly, applying these observations to the poetical parts of *The Canterbury Tales*, as they are faithfully printed in this edition from the best mss. which I could procure, I shall leave it to the intelligent reader to determine whether Chaucer was really ignorant of the laws, or even of the graces, of Versification, and whether he was more negligent of either than the very early poets in almost all languages are found to have been.

PART THE FIRST.

§ I. In order to judge, in the first place, how far Chaucer ought to be charged as the importer of the many French words and phrases which are so visible in all his writings, it will be necessary to take a short view of the early introduction and long prevalency of the French language in this country before his time. It might be sufficient perhaps for our purpose to begin this view at the conquest; but I cannot help observing from a contemporary historian, that several years before that great event the language of France had been introduced into the court of Eng-

land, and from thence among the people. The account which Ingulphus gives of this matter is (5), that Edward, commonly called The Confessor, having been educated at the court of his uncle Duke Richard II. and having resided in Normandy many years, became *almost a Frenchman*: upon his return from thence, and accession to the throne of England in 1043, he brought over with him a number of Normans, whom he promoted to the highest dignities; and (according to Ingulphus) under the influence of the King and his Norman favourites the whole nation began to lay aside their English fashions, and imitate the manners of the French in many things; in particular, he says expressly that *all the nobility in their courts began to speak French as a great piece of gentility*.

§ 2. This fashion, however, of speaking French, having been adopted only in compliance with the caprice of the reigning prince, would not probably have spread very wide or lasted very long; but at the revolution, which followed soon after in 1066, the language of the Norman conqueror was interwoven with the new political system (6), and the

(5) Ingulph. Hist. Croyl. p. 62. ed. Gale. "Rex autem Edwardus natus in Anglia, sed nutritus in Normania et diutissime immoratus, pene in Gallicum transierat, adducens ac attrahens de Normania plurimos, quos variis dignitatibus promotos in immensum exaltabat.—Cœpit ergo tota terra sub Rege et sub aliis Normanis introductis Anglicos ritus dimittere, et Francorum mores in multis imitari, Gallicum [scilicet] idioma omnes Magnates in suis curiis tanquam magnum gentilitium loqui, chartas et chirographa sua more Francorum conficere, et propriam consuetudinem in his et aliis multis erubescere."

(6) Robert Holkot (as quoted by Selden, *ad Eadmer*, p. 189)

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several establishments which were made for the support and security of the one all contributed, in a greater or less degree, to the diffusion and permanency of the other.

§ 3. To begin with the court. If we consider that the King himself, the chief officers of state, and by far the greatest part of the nobility, were all Normans, and could probably speak no language but their own, we can have no doubt that French (7)

says that the Conqueror—"deliberavit quomodo linguam "Saxonicam posset destruere, et Angliam et Normaniam in "idiomate concordare."—But Holkot wrote only in the 14th century, and I do not find that the earlier historians impute to the King so silly a project. On the contrary Ordericus Vitalis [l. iv. 520,] assures us that William—"Anglicam locutionem "plerumpque sategit ediscere: ut sine interprete querelam "subjectæ legis posset intelligere, et scita rectitudinis unicuique " (prout ratio dictaret) affectuose depromere. Ast a perceptione "hujusmodi durior ætas illum compecebat, et tumultus mul- "timodarum occupationum ad alia necessario adtrahebat."—And several of his publick instruments, which are still extant in Saxon, [Hicks G. A. S. p. 164—Præf. p. xv, xvi,] prove that he had no objection to using that language in business; so that it seems more natural to suppose that the introduction of the French language was a consequence only and not an object of his policy.

(7) I apprehend that long before this time the Danish tongue had ceased to be spoken in Normandy; it was never general there, as appears from a passage of Dudon, l. iii. p. 112. Duke William I. gives this reason for sending his son Richard to be educated at Baieux; "Quoniam quidem Rotomagensis civitas "Romanâ potius quam Daciscâ utitur eloquentiâ, et Bajoca- "censis fruitur frequentius Daciscâ linguâ quam Romanâ, volo "igitur ut ad Bajocacensia deferatur quantocius mœnia," &c. If we recollect that the Danish settlers under Rollo were few in comparison with the original inhabitants, and had probably scarce any use of letters among them, we shall not be surpris'd

was the ordinary language of the court. The few Saxons who for some time (8) were admitted there must have had the strongest inducements to acquire the same language as soon as possible, not merely for the sake of apprehending and answering insignificant questions in the circle, but because in that age affairs of the greatest importance were publicly transacted in the King's court, and there they might be called upon to answer for their possessions and even for their lives. In an ecclesiastical synod held in the presence of the King in 1072, the venerable Bishop of Worcester, Wulfstan, (whose *holy simplicity*, as the historian calls it (9), seems to have preserved him

that they did not preserve their language for above two or three generations.—From two other passages of the same Dutton we learn that the Danish language, while it lasted in Normandy, was very similar to the Saxon, [p. 99,] and yet different from it, [p. 100,] *qualem decet esse forem*.

(8) After the death of Edwin and the imprisonment of Morcar in 1070, we do not read of any Saxon earl except Walthof, and he was executed for misprision of treason about three years after, *Orderic. Vit. l. iv. p. 535*. It is singular that Walthof, according to the Saxon law, suffered death for the concealment of that treason for which Roger de Breteuil, Earl of Hereford, being tried *secundum leges Normannorum*, could only be punished by a forfeiture of his inheritance and perpetual imprisonment, *Id. p. 535*. From this time (says Ingulphus, p. 70.)
 “Comitatus et Baronias, Episcopatus et Praelatas, totius ten-
 “tius Normanis Rex distribuit, et vix aliquem Anglicum ad ho-
 “noris statum vel alicujus domini principatum ascendere per-
 “misse.”

(9) Will. Malmesb. l. iii. p. 118, “Hic sancta simplicitas beati Wulfstani, &c.” The story which follows perfectly justifies this character. Matt. Paris [*an. 1095*,] says that in another synod there was a formal design of deposing Wulfstan, and that he was saved only by a miracle. He was accused “simplicitatis

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from the degradation which almost all the other English prelates underwent) was obliged to defend the rights of his see by an interpreter "a monk" (according to the same (10) historian) "of very little eloquence, but who had a smattering of the Norman language."

§ 4. If we consider further that the great barons, to whom William (11) distributed a large share of his conquest, when released from their attendance in the King's court retired to courts of their own, where they in their turn were surrounded by a numerous train of vassals, chiefly their own countrymen, we may be sure that the French language travelled with them into the most distant provinces, and was used by them not only in their common conversation but in their civil contracts, their judicial proceedings, and even in the promulgation of their laws (12). The many

"et illiteraturæ;"—"et quasi homo idiota, qui linguam Gallicanam non noverat, nec regiis consiliis interesse poterat, ipso Rege consentiente et hoc distante, decernitur deponendus."

(10) *Ibid.* "Ita datâ benedictione Monacho, minimæ fæcundie viro, sed Normannicæ linguæ sciolo, rem perorans obtinuit."

(11) There is a curious detail of part of this distribution in Ordericus Vitalis. l. iv. p. 521, 2, which concludes thus:—"aliique advenis, qui sibi cohæserant, magnos et multos honores contulit; et in tantum quosdam provexit, ut multos in Angliâ ditiores et potentiores haberent clientes, quam eorum in Neustriâ fuerant parentes." There is an account in the *Mon. Angl.* t. i. p. 400. of the Conqueror's giving the whole county of Cumberland to Ranulph de Meschines, and of the division which Ranulph made of it among his relations and followers, who appear to have been all foreigners.

(12) The ancient earls had a power of legislation within their counties. William of Malmesbury, speaking of William Fitz

castles which William built (13) in different parts of the island must also have contributed very much to the propagation of the French language among the natives, as it is probable that the foreigners, of whom the garrisons were (14) entirely composed, would insist upon carrying on all their transactions with the neighbouring country in their own language.

§5. But the great alteration which from political motives was made in the state of the clergy at that Osberne, Earl of Hereford, says, “Manet in hunc diem in Comitatu ejus apud Herefordum legum quas statuit inconcussa firmitas; ut nullus miles pro qualicumque commisso plus septem solidis solvat; cum in aliis provinciis ob parvam occasioneculam in transgressionem præcepti herilis, viginti vel viginti quinque pendantur.” L. iii. p. 105.

(13) Ordericus Vitalis [L. iv. p. 511,] observes that before the conquest “Munitiones, quas Castella Galli nuncupant, Anglicis provinciis paucissimæ fuerant: et ob hoc Angli, licet bellicosi fuerint et audaces, ad resistendum tamen inimicis extiterant debiliores.” William at his landing placed garrisons at Pevensey and Hastings; after the battle he took possession of Dover and left a garrison there. He caused *armamenta quedam* to be made at London, and built a strong citadel at Winchester. Upon his return from Normandy, after the first insurrection of the English, he built a castle within the city of Exeter, another at Warwick, and another at Nottingham. In the city of York “munitionem firmavit, quam delectis militibus custodiendam tradidit.” At Lincoln, Huntingdon, and Cambridge, “castra locavit, et tutelam eorum fortissimis viris commendavit.” He had also garrisons at Montacute in Somersetshire, and at Shrewsbury. He built fortifications at Chester and Stafford. We read also of castles at Arundel and Sturtebury at this time, and Norwich was so strong as to stand a siege of three months. *Ord. Vit.* p. 500—535.

(14) Orderic. Vital. l. iv. p. 506, “Custodes in castellis strenuos viros ex Gallis collocavit, et opulenta beneficia, pro quibus labores et pericula libenter tolerarent, distribuit.”

time must have operated perhaps more efficaciously than any other cause to give the French language a deep root in England. The Conqueror seems to have been fully apprised of the strength which the new government might derive from a clergy more closely attached to himself by a community of interests than the native English were likely to be; accordingly from the very beginning of his reign all ecclesiastical preferments, as fast as they became vacant, were given to his Norman chaplains; and, not content to avail himself of the ordinary course of succession, he contrived (15), upon various charges of real or pretended

(15) See the transactions of the council held at Winchester in the year 1070, *ap. Flor. Wigorn.* p. 636. Having spoken of the degradation of Stigand Archbishop of Canterbury, and Agelmar Bishop of the East Saxons, he proceeds thus; “*Abbates etiam aliqui ibi degradati sunt, operam dante rege ut quamplures ex Anglis suo honore privarentur, in quorum locum sue gentis personas subrogavit, ob confirmationem sui (quod noviter acquisierat) regni. Hic et nonnullos, tam episcopos quam Abbates, quos nulla evidenti causa nec concilia nec leges seculi damnavant, suis honoribus privavit, et usque ad finem vite custodiæ mancipatos detinuit, suspicione, ut diximus, tantum inductus novi regni.*”—In confirmation of what is said here and in the text, if we examine the subscriptions to an ecclesiastical constitution in 1072, *ap. Will. Malm.* l. iii. p. 117, we find that the two archbishops, seven bishops out of eleven, and six abbots out of twelve, were foreigners; and in about five years more the four other bishopricks, and five at least of the other six abbeys, were in the hands of foreigners.—Another ecclesiastical constitution made at this time has very much the appearance of a political regulation: it orders “that the bishops’ seats shall be removed from towns to cities;” and in consequence of it the see of Litchfield was removed to Chester, that of Selsey to Chichester, that of Elmham to Thetford, and afterwards to Norwich, that of Shireburne to Salisbury, and

irregularities, to remove several of the English bishops and abbots, whose places were in like manner immediately supplied by foreigners. In short, in the space of a very few years all the sees of England were filled with Normans, or strangers naturalized (if I may so say) in Normandy, and the greatest part of the abbies in the kingdom were under governors of the same description.

§ 6. It must be allowed that the confessed superiority (16) in literature of the Norman clergy over the English at that time furnished the King with a specious pretext for these promotions; and it is probable that the prelates who were thus promoted made use of the same pretext to justify themselves in disposing of all their best benefices among their friends and countrymen: that this was their constant practice is certain: nor were the new abbots less industrious

that of Dorchester to Lincoln, *Will. Malm.* l. iii. p. 118. When the King had got a set of bishops to his mind he would wish to have them placed where their influence could be of most service to him.

(16) Ordericus Vitalis, l. iv. p. 518, says that the Normans at the conquest found the English *agrestes et pene illiteratos*; and he imputes, with some probability, the decay of learning among them, from the time of Beda and others, to the continual ravages and oppressions of the Danes. See also *William of Malmesbury*, l. iii. p. 101, 2. It may be observed too, from *Continuat. Hist. Croyland*, by Peter of Blois, p. 114, that the first regular lectures (of which we have any account) at Cambridge were read there by four foreign monks, who had come over into England with Jeffrey Abbot of Croyland, formerly Prior of St. Evroul: they are said to have read “*diversis in locis a se divisi et formam Aurelianensis studii secuti*,” three of them in grammar, logick, and rhetorick, and the fourth in theology.

to stock their convents (17) with foreigners, whom they invited over from the continent partly perhaps for the pleasure of their society, and partly (as we may suppose) in expectation of their support against the cabals of the English monks. And when the great barons, following the royal example, applied themselves to make their peace with the church by giving her a share of their plunder, it was their usual custom to begin their religious establishments with a colony from some Norman monastery (18).

§ 7. In this state of things, which seems to have continued (19) with little variation to the time of Ed-

(17) See the preceding note. There was no great harmony at first between the English monks and their new governors. See the proceedings at Glastonbury under Thurstan, [*W. Malm.* l. iii. p. 110.] and at Canterbury against Wido, [*Chron. Saxon.* p. 179, 180; *ed. Gibson.*]

(18) The Conqueror had put Gosbert, a monk of Marmontier, at the head of his new foundation of Battle Abbey, [*Ord. Vit.* l. iv. p. 505.] In like manner Roger de Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury, sent for monks from Sees to begin his abbey at Shrewsbury, [*Id.* l. v. p. 581.] Walter Espec also brought over monks of Clervaulx to fill his two abbeys of Rivaux and Wardun, [*Altr. Rievall. ap. x. Script.* p. 338.]—Beside these and many other independent foundations, which were in this manner opened for the reception of foreign monks in preference to the natives, a considerable number of religious houses were built and endowed as cells to different monasteries abroad, and as such were constantly filled by detachments from the superiour society; they are frequently mentioned in our histories under the general name of the *Alien Priories*; and though several of them, upon various pretexts, had withdrawn themselves from their foreign connexions, and been made denizens, no less than one hundred and forty remained in 1414, which were then all suppressed, and their revenues vested in the crown. See the *List. Monast. Angl.* v. i. p. 1035.

(19) I suppose that during this whole period of above 250 years the English language was continually gaining ground by

ward III. it is probable that the French and English languages subsisted together throughout the kingdom, slow and almost imperceptible degrees, in proportion nearly as the English natives were emerging from that state of depression in which they were placed by the conquest: we have no reason to believe that much progress was made in either of these matters before the reign of King John. The loss of Normandy, &c. in that reign, and the consequent regulations of Hen. III. and Louis IX. by which the subjects of either crown were made incapable of holding lands in the dominions of the other, [*Matth. Paris, ad an. 1244.*] must have greatly diminished the usual conflux of Normans to the English court; and the intestine commotions in this country under John and Henry III. in which so many of the greater barons lost their lives and estates, must eventually have opened a way for the English to raise themselves to honours and possessions, to which they had very rarely before been admitted to aspire.—In the year 1258, the 42 Hen. III. we have a particular instance (the first I believe of the kind) of attention on the side of government to the English part of the community. The letters patent which the King was advised to publish in support of the Oxford provisions were sent to each county in Latin, French, and English, [*Annal. Burton. p. 416.*] One of them has been printed from the patent-roll, 43 Henry III. n. 40. m. 15, by Somner in his *Dist. Sax. v. Unnan*, and by Hearne, *Text. Ross. p. 391*. At the same time all the proceedings in the business of the provisions appear to have been carried on in French, and the principal persons in both parties are evidently of foreign extraction.—If a conjecture may be allowed in a matter so little capable of proof, I should think it probable that the necessity which the great barons were under at this time of engaging the body of the people to support them in their opposition to a new set of foreigners, chiefly Poitevins, contributed very much to abolish the invidious distinctions which had long subsisted between the French and English parts of the nation. In the early times after the conquest, if we may believe Henry of Huntingdon, [*L. vi. p. 370.*] *to be called an Englishman was a reproach*: but when the Clares, the Bohuns, the Bigods, &c. were raising armies for the expulsion of for-

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the higher orders both of the clergy and laity (20) speaking almost universally French, the lower retainers out of the kingdom, they would not probably be unwilling to have themselves considered as natives of England; accordingly Matthew Paris, [p. 833,] calls Hugh Bigod (a brother of the Earl Marthall) *virum de terra Anglorum naturalem et ingenuum*; and in another passage, [p. 851,] he appropriates the title of *alienigenæ* to those foreigners *qui Regine attinentes per eam introducti fuerant in Angliam*; and so perhaps the word ought generally to be understood in the transactions of that reign: none but persons born out of England were then esteemed as foreigners. — About the same time we find an archbishop of York objecting to clerks (recommended to benefices by the Pope) because they were “ignorant of the English language,” [M.H. P.R. p. 831,] which seems to imply that a knowledge of that language was then considered among the proper qualifications of an ecclesiastick; but that it was not necessarily required, even in the parochial clergy, appears from the great number of foreign parsons, vicars, &c. who had the King’s letters of protection in the 25 year of Edw. I. See the *Lives in Prynn*, t. i. p. 709---720.

(20) The testimony of Robert of Gloucester (who lived in the times of H. III. and E. I.) is so full and precise to this point that I trust the reader will not be displeased to see it in his own words, or rather in the words of that very incorrect ms. which Hearne has religiously followed in his edition:

Rob. Glouc. p. 364.

Thus come lo! Engeland into Normannes honde,
And the Normans ne couthe speke tho *bote her owne* (a) speche,
And speke French as *dude atom* (b), and here chyldren dude
al so teche,

So that hey men of thys lond, that of her blod come,
Holdeth alle thulke speche that hii of hem nome.
For bote (c) a man couthe French, *me tolth* (d) of hym well late;
As (e) lowe men holdeth to Englyss and and to her *kunde* speche
yute (f).

(a) But their own.

(b) Did at home.

(c) For but.

(d) Men told.—late, little.

(e) But.—kunde, natural.

(f) Yet.

ing the use of their native tongue, but also frequently adding to it a knowledge of the other. The general inducements which the English had to acquire the French language have been touched upon above; to which must be added, that the children who were put to learn Latin were under a necessity of learning French at the same time, as it was the constant

Ich wene ther ne be man in world contreyes none,
That ne holdeth to her kunde speche, bote Engeland one.
Ac well me wot vor to conne bothe wel yt ys,
Vor the more that a man con the more worth he ys.

I shall throw together here a few miscellaneous facts in confirmation of this general testimony of Robert of Gloucestre.—A letter of Hugh Bishop of Coventry, preserved by Hoveden [p. 704.] assures us that William Bishop of Ely, Chancellor and Prime Minister to Richard I. *linguam Anglicanam prorsus ignorabat*.—In the reign of Henry III. Robert of Gloucestre intending, as it should seem, to give the very words of Peter Bishop of Hereford, (whom he has just called “a Friens bishop,”) makes him speak thus—*Par Crist, he sede, Sir Tomas, tu is marveis. Meint hente ay fet.* Rob. Glouc. p. 537.—There is a more pleasant instance of the familiar use of the French language by a bishop as late as the time of Edward II. Louis, consecrated Bishop of Durham in 1318, was unfortunately very illiterate—“*laicus; Latinum non intelligens, sed cum difficultate pronuncians. Unde, cum in consecratione sua profiteri debuit, quamvis per multos dies ante instructorem habuisset, legre nescivit: et cum, auriculantibus [i. articulantibus] aliis, cum difficultate ad illud verbum metropolitice pervenisset, et diu anhelans pronunciare non posset, dixit in Gallico; Seiz pur dite.*—Et cum similiter celebraret ordines, nec illud verbum in enigmate proferre posset, dixit circumstantibus; *Par Seint Loreys, il ne fu pas curteis, qui cest parole ici eferit.*” *Hist. Dunelm. ap. Wharton, Ang. Sac. t. i. p. 761.*—The transactions at Norham in 1291, the 20 Ed. I. with respect to the Scottish succession, appear to have been almost wholly carried

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practice in all schools from the conquest (21) till about the reign of Edward III. to make the scholars

on in French, for which it is difficult to account but by supposing that language to have been the language of the court in both nations. [See *the Roll de Superior. Reg. Angl. in Prymme*, t. i. p. 487, *et seq.*] Edward's claim of the superiority is first made by Sir Roger Brabançon, *Sermone Gallico*, and afterwards the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and the king himself, speak to the assembly of English and Scots in the same language. [*Ibid.* p. 499, 501.]—The answers of the Bishop of Durham to the Pope's nuncios in *Gallico*, [*Walt. Hemingsf. ad an. 1295.*] may be supposed to have been out of complaisance to the cardinals, (though, by the way, they do not appear to have been Frenchmen) but no such construction can be put upon the following fact related by Matthew of Westminster. [*ad an. 1301*, p. 438.] The Archbishop of Canterbury informs the Pope that he had presented his Holiness' letters to the king in a full court, *quasi ipse dominus rex reverenter recipiens, eas publice legi gram omnibus*, et in Gallicâ linguâ fecerat patenter exponi.

(21) Ingulphus, a contemporary writer, informs us that this practice began at the conquest, [p. 71.] “*Ipsum etiam idioma [Anglicum] tantum abhorrebant, [Normanni,] quod leges terræ statutæque Anglicorum regum linguâ Gallicâ tractarentur; et pueris etiam in scholis principio literarum grammatica Gallice ac non Anglice traderentur; modus etiam scribendi Anglicus omitteretur, et modus Gallicus in chartis et in libris omnibus admitteretur.*” And Trevisa, the translator and augmentor of Higden's Polychronicon in the reign of Richard II. gives us a very particular account of its beginning to be disused within his own memory. The two passages of Higden and Trevisa throw so much light upon the subject of our present inquiry that I shall insert them both at length from *ms. Harl. 1900*, as being more correct in several places than the *ms.* from which Dr. Hickes formerly printed them in his *pref. ad Thes. Ling. Septent.* p. xvii.—*Higden's Polychron.* l. c. lix. “*This apayringe of the birthe tonge is by cause of tweye thinges; oon is for children in scole, azenes the usage*

construe their Latin lessons into French. From the discontinuance of this practice, as well as from other causes, the use, and probably the knowledge, of French as a separate language received a considerable check. In the 36 year of Edward III. a law (22) was

“and maner of alle other naciouns, beth compelled for to lere
“her owne langage, and for to confrewe her lessouns and her
“thingis a Frensche, and haveth siththe that the Normans
“come first into England. Also gentil mennes children beth
“ytauzt for to speke Frensche from the tyme that thei both
“rokked in her cradel, and kunneth speke and playe with a
“childes brooch; and upondish men wole likne hem self to
“gentilmen, and fondeth with grete bisynesse for to speke
“Frensche, for to be the more ytold of.”—*Freewill*. “This
“maner was myche yused to fore the first moreyn, and is siththe
“the some del ychaungide; for John Cornwalle, a maister of
“grammer, chaungide the lore in grammer scole and con-
“struction of Frensch into Englisch, and Richard Pencerich
“lerned that manerteching of him, and other men of Frenche;
“so that now the zere of oure Lord a thousand thre hundred
“foure score and syve, of the secunde King Rycharde after the
“conquest nyne, in alle the grammer scoles of Englonde children
“leveth Frensch, and construeth and lerneth an Englisch, and
“haveth thereby avauntage in oon side and desavauntage in
“another. Her avauntage is, that thei lerneth her grammer in
“lasse tyme than children were wont to do; desavauntage is,
“that now children of grammer scole kunneth no more Frensch
“than can her liste heele; and that is harm for hem, and the
“schul passe the see and travaille in strange londes, and in ma-
“ny other places also: also gentilmen haveth now mych ylesse
“for to teche her children Frensch.”

(22) This celebrated statute is said by Walsingham [p. 179] to have been made *ad petitionem communitatis*; but no such petition appears upon the parliament-roll, and it seems rather to have been an act of grace moving from the King, who on the same day entered into the fiftieth year of his age; “*under suo jubileo populo suo se exhibuit gratiofum.*” *Wals. lib. ii.* It is remarkable too that the cause of summons at the beginning

made "that all pleas in the courts of the king, or
"of any other lord, shall be pleaded and judged in
"the English tongue;" and the preamble recites,
"that the French tongue" (in which they had been
usually pleaded, &c.) "was too much unknown"
or disused; and yet for near threescore years after
this (23) the proceedings in parliament (with very

this parliament was declared by Sir Henry Greene, Chief Justice, *en Anglais*, (says the record for the first time) and the same entry is repeated in the records of the parliaments 37 and 38 Edw. III. but not in those of 40 Edw. III. or of any later parliament, either because the custom of opening the cause of summons in French was restored again after that short interval, or perhaps because the new practice of opening it in English was so well established (in the opinion of the clerk) as not to need being marked by a special entry. — The reasons assigned in the preamble to this statute for having pleas and judgments in the English tongue might all have been urged, with at least equal force, for having the laws themselves in that language: but the times were not yet ripe for that innovation; the English scale was clearly beginning to preponderate, but the slowness of its motion proves that it had a great weight to overcome.

(23) All the parliamentary proceedings in English before 1422, the first of Henry VI. are the few which follow. — The confession of Thomas Duke of Gloucester, taken at Calais by William Rickhill, and recorded in parliament, *inter Plac. Coron.* 21 Rich. II. n. 9. It is printed in *Tyrrel*, v. iii. p. 793. — Some passages in the deposition of Richard II. printed at the end of Knighton, *int. X. Scriptores*. — The ordinance between William Lord the Roos and Robert Tirwhitt, Justice of the King's Bench, 15 Hen. IV. n. 13. — A petition of the Commons with the king's answer, 2 Hen. V. n. 22. — A proviso in English, inserted into a French grant of a disme and quinzeme, 9 Hen. V. n. 10. — At the beginning of the reign of Henry VI. the two languages seem to have been used indifferently. The subsidy of Wille, &c. was granted in English 1 Hen. VI. n. 19. A pro-

we exceptions) appear to have been all in French, and the statutes continued to be published in the same language for above one hundred and twenty years, till the 1 of Richard III.

§ 8. From what has been said I think we may fairly conclude that the English language must have imbibed a strong tincture of the French long before the age of Chaucer, and consequently that he ought not to be charged as the importer of words and phrases which he only used after the example of his predecessors, and in common with his contemporaries. This was the real fact, and is capable of being demonstrated to any one who will take the trouble of comparing the writings of Chaucer with those of Robert of Gloucester and Robert of Brunne (24),

vise in French was added by the Commons to the articles for the council of regency, which are in English, *ibid.* n. 33 Even the royal assent was given to bills in English 2 Hen. VI. n. 54. Be it ordeined as it is asked. Be it as it is axed. — And again, n. 55. — I have stated this matter so particularly, in order to shew that when the French language ceased to be generally understood it was gradually disused in parliamentary proceedings; and from thence, I think, we may fairly infer that while it was used in those proceedings constantly and exclusively of the English, it must have been very generally understood.

(24) Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle has been published by Hearne, Oxf. 1724, faithfully, I dare say, but from incorrect mss. The author speaks of himself [page 560.] as living at the time of the battle of Evesham in 1265; and from another passage [p. 224.] he seems to have lived beyond the year 1278, though his history ends in 1270. See *Hearne's Pref.* p. 48. — Robert Manning, of Brunne or Bourn in Lincolnshire, translated into English rhymes, from the French of Robert Gossieteste Bishop of Lincoln, a treatise called *Manuel de Pechés*, as early as the year 1303. This work of his has never been printed, but is preserved among the Harleian mss. n. 1701, and the Bodleian,

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who both lived before him, and with those of Sir John Mandeville and Wickliffe, who lived at the same time with him. If we could for a moment suppose the contrary, if we could suppose that the English idiom in the age of Chaucer remained pure and unmixed, as it was spoken in the courts of Alfred or Egbert, and that the French was still a foreign or at least a separate language, I would ask whether it is credible that a poet writing in English upon the most familiar subjects would stuff his compositions with French words and phrases, which (upon the above supposition) must have been unintelligible to the greatest part of his readers? or if he had been so very absurd, is it conceivable that he should have immediately become not only the most admired but also the most popular writer of his time and country?

PART THE SECOND.

HAVING thus endeavoured to shew, in opposition to the ill grounded censures of Verstegan and Skinner, that the corruption (or improvement) of the English Language by a mixture of French was not originally

n. 2323. He also translated from the French an history of England, the first part, or *Gesta Britonum*, from Mr. Wace, the remainder, to the death of Ed. I. from Peter of Langtoit. His translation was finished in 1338: the latter part, with some extracts from the former, was printed by Hearne in 1725 from a single ms.—Sir John Mandeville's Account of his Travels was written in 1356. In the last edition, Lond. 1727, the text is said to have been formed from a collation of several mss. and seems to be tolerably correct.—Wickliffe died in 1384: his translation of The New Testament was printed for the first time by Lewis, Lond. 1731. There is an immense catalogue of other works, either really his or ascribed to him, still extant in ms. See his Life by *Lezeli*, and *Tanner*, *Bibl. Brit.*

owing to Chaucer, I shall proceed, in the second part of this Essay, to make some observations upon the most material peculiarities of that Norman-Saxon dialect which I suppose to have prevailed in the age of Chaucer, and which in substance remains to this day the Language of England.

§ I. By what means the French tongue was first introduced and propagated in this island has been sufficiently explained above; but to ascertain with any exactness the degrees by which it insinuated itself and was ingrafted into the Saxon would be a much more difficult task (25), for want of a regular series of the writings of approved authors transmitted to us by authentick copies. Luckily for us, as our concern is solely with that period when the incorporation of the two Languages was completed, it is of no great importance to determine the precise time at which any word or phrase became naturalized; and for the same reason we have no need to inquire minutely with respect to the other alterations which the Saxon language in its several stages appears to have undergone, how far they proceeded

(25) In order to trace with exactness the progress of any language, it seems necessary, 1. that we should have before us a continued series of authors; 2. that those authors should have been approved as having written at least with purity; and, 3. that their writings should have been exactly copied. In the English Language we have scarce any authors within the first century after the conquest; of those who wrote before Chaucer, and whose writings have been preserved, we have no testimony of approbation from their contemporaries or successors; and lastly, the copies of their works which we have received are in general so full of inaccuracies as to make it often very difficult for us to be assured that we are in possession of the genuine words of the author.

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from the natural mutability of human speech (especially among an unlearned people) and how far they were owing to a successive conflux of Danish and Norman invaders.

§ 2. The following observations, therefore, will chiefly refer to the state in which the English Language appears to have been about the time of Chaucer, and they will naturally divide themselves into two parts: the first will consider the remains of the ancient Saxon mass, however defaced or disguised by various accidents; the second will endeavour to point out the nature and effects of the accessions which in the course of near three centuries it had received from Normandy.

§ 3. For the sake of method it will be convenient to go through the several parts of speech in the order in which they are commonly ranged by grammarians.

1. The prepositive article *pe, poe, pat*, (which answered to the *ὁ, ἡ, το*, of the Greeks, in all its varieties of gender, case, and number) had been long laid aside, and instead of it an indeclinable *the* was prefixed to all sorts of nouns in all cases, and in both numbers.

2. The declensions of the nouns substantive were reduced from six to one; and instead of a variety of cases in both numbers they had only a genitive case singular, which was uniformly deduced from the nominative by adding to it *es*, or only *s*, if it ended an *e* feminine; and that same form was used to express the (26) plural number in all its cases, as

(26) It is scarce necessary to take notice of a few plurals which were expressed differently, though their number was greater in the time of Chaucer than it is now: some of them

nom. *þour*, gen. *þoures*, plur. *þoures*; nom. *name*, gen. *names*, plur. *names*.

The nouns adjective had lost all distinction of gender, case, or number.

3. The primitive pronouns retained one oblique case (27) in each number, as *ic* or *I*, *we*; obl. *me*, *us*—*thou*, *ye*; obl. *thee*, *you*—*he*, *she*; *hi* (28), or *they*; obl. *him*, *hire*, *hem*, or *them*.

Their possessives were in the same state with the adjectives, *min*, *thin*, *his*, *hire*; *oure*, *youre*, *hir*, or *their* (29).

seem to retain their termination in *en* from the second declension of the Saxons, as *oxen*, *eyen*, *hofen*, &c.; others seem to have adopted it *euphone gratia*, as *breibren*, *eyren*, instead of *bpo-ðnu æghnu*; and a few seem to have been always irregularly declined, as *men*, *zwimmen*, *mice*, *lice*, *feet*, &c. See *Hickes, Gr. A. S. p. 11, 12.*

(27) I take no notice here of the genitive cases *min*, *thin*, *oure*, *youre*, &c. as being at this time hardly ever distinguishable from pronouns possessive. How are we to know whether *min boke* should be rendered *liber mei* or *liber meus*? In the plural number however, in a few instances, the genitive case seems to have retained its proper power, C. T. v. 825; *oure aller cok*—would be more naturally translated—*nostrum omnium galus*, than *noster omnium*. And so in P. P. fol. cxi, *youre aller hele*, *vestrum omnium salus*, not *vestra*.

(28) It is very difficult to say from whence or why the pronouns *they*, *them*, and *their*, were introduced into our language. The Saxon pronouns *hi*, *hem*, and *hir*, seem to have been in constant use in the time of Robert of Gloucester. Sir John Mandeville and Chaucer use *they* for *hi*, but never, as I remember, (in the mil. of authority) *them* or *their*.

(29) The four last of these possessive pronouns were sometimes expressed a little differently, viz. *hires*, *oures*, *youres*, and *hirs*, or *theirs*, as they are still when the noun to which they belong is understood, or when they are placed after it in a sentence. To the question, Whose book is this? we answer, *her's*, *ours*,

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The interrogative and relative *who* had a genitive and accusative case, *whos* and *whom*, but no variety of number.

On the contrary the demonstrative, *this* and *that*, had a plural expression, *thise* and *tho*, but no variety of case.

The other words, which are often (though improperly) placed in the class of pronouns, were all become undeclined like the adjectives, except *eyther*, alteruter; *neyther*, neuter; *other*, alter; which had a genitive case singular, *eytheres*, *neytheres*, *otheres*; *other*, alius, had a genitive case singular, and a plural number, *oheres*; and *aller* (a corruption of *calpa*) was still in use as the genitive plural of *alle* (30).

your's, or *theirs*; or we declare this book is *her's*, *ours*, &c. I can hardly conceive that the final *s* in these words is a mark of the possessive (or genitive) case, as a very able writer [*Short Introduction to English Grammar*, p. 35, 6.] seems to be inclined to think; because in the instances just mentioned, and in all which I have been able to find or to imagine, I cannot discover the least trace of the usual powers of the genitive case. The learned Wallis [*Gram. Ang.* c. 7.] has explained the use of these pronouns without attempting to account for their form; he only adds; "Nonnulli, *bern*, *ourn*, *yourn*, *bisn*, dicunt pro *her's*, "*ours*, &c. sed barbarè, nec quisquam (credo) sic scribere solent." If it could be proved that these words were anciently terminated in *n* we might be led to conjecture that they were originally abbreviations of *her own*, *our own*, &c. the *n* being afterwards softened into *s*, as it has been in many other words.

(30) It may be proper here to take a little notice of the pronoun or pronominal adjective *self*, which our best grammarians from Wallis downwards have attempted to metamorphose into a substantive. In the Saxon language it is certain that *self* was declined like other adjectives, and was joined in constructions with pronouns personal and substantives, just as *ipse* is in Latin. They said, *ic self*, ego ipse; *min sylfes*, mei ip-

4. The verbs, at the time of which we are treating, were very nearly reduced to the simple state in which they are at present.

finis; me sylfne, me ipsum, &c. Petrus sylf, Petrus ipse, &c. [See *Hæker, Gr. A. S.* p. 26.] In the age of Chaucer *self*, like other adjectives, was become undeclined. Though he writes *self, selve, and selven*, those varieties do not denote any distinction of case or number, for he uses indifferently *himself* and *himselven*, *hemself* and *hemselven*. He joins it with substantives in the sense of *ipse*, as the Saxons did. [See v. 2862. In that *selve* grove, in illo ipso nemore—v. 4535. Thy *selve* neighbour, ipse tuus vicinus.] But his great departure from the ancient usage was with respect to the pronouns personal prefixed to *self*: instead of declining them thro' the cases which they still retained, he uses constantly *myself* for I self and me self, *thyself* for thou self and thee self, *himself* and *hire self*, for he self and she self, and in the plural number *our self* for we self and us self, *your self* for ye self and yow self, and *hem self* for they self.--- It would be vain to attempt to defend this practice of Chaucer upon any principles of reason or grammatical analogy; all that can be said for it is, that perhaps any regular practice was preferable to the confusion and uncertainty which seems to have prevailed before: accordingly the writers who succeeded him following his example, it became a rule, as I conceive, of the English Language that personal pronouns prefixed to *self* were only used in one case in each number, viz. those of the first and second person in the genitive case (according to the Saxon form) and those of the third in the accusative.---By degrees a custom was introduced of annexing *self* to pronouns in the singular number only, and *selves* (a corruption, I suppose, of *selven*) to those in the plural. This probably contributed to persuade our late grammarians that *self* was a substantive, as the true English adjective does not vary in the plural number. Another cause of their mistake might be, that they considered *my, thy, our, your*, (to which *self* is usually joined) as pronouns possessive, whereas I think it more probable that they were the Saxon genitive cases of the personal pronouns. The metaphorical substantive *self*, of which our more modern philoso-

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They had four modes, as now; the indicative, the imperative, the subjunctive, and the infinitive; and only two expressions of time, the present and the past. All the other varieties of mode and time were expressed by auxiliary verbs.

In the inflections of their verbs they differed very little from us in the singular number, *I love, thou lovest, he loveth*; but in the plural they were not agreed among themselves, some (31) adhering to the old Saxon form, *we loveth, ye loveth, they loveth*, and others adopting what seems to have been the Teutonic, *we loven, ye loven, they loven*. In the plural of the past tense the latter form prevailed universally, *I loved, thou lovedst, he loved; we loveden, ye loveden, they loveden*.

The second person plural in the imperative mode regularly terminated in *eth*, as *loveth ye* (32), though the final consonants (according to the genius of the language) were frequently omitted, especially in verse.

The Saxon termination of the infinitive in *an* had been long changed into *en*, to *loven*, to *liven*, &c. and they were beginning to drop the *n*, to *love*, to *live*.

The participle of the present time began to be generally terminated in *ing*, as *loving*, though the old form, which terminated in *ende* or *ande*, was still in use, as *lovende* or *lovande*. The participle of the

phers and poets have made so much use, was unknown, I believe, in the time of Chaucer.

(31) In the long quotation from Trevisa (which see above, n. 21.) it may be observed that all his plural verbs of the present tense terminate in *eth*, whereas in Sir John Maundeville and Chaucer they terminate almost as constantly in *en*.

(32) *Mand. p. 281.* And at certeyn houres—thei seyn to certeyn officeres—*Maketh pees* (i. e. make ye silence.) And than seyn the officeres, *Now pees! lyssneth* (i. e. listen ye)---In the following page *standeth* is used for *stand ye*, and *putteth* for *put ye*.

past time continued to be formed, as the past time itself was, in *ed*, as *loved*, or in some contraction of *ed* (53), except among the irregular verbs (34),

(33) The methods by which the final *ed* of the past tense, and its participle, was contracted or abbreviated in the age of Chaucer were chiefly the following:

1. By throwing away the *d*.—This method took place in verbs whose last consonant was *t*, preceded by a consonant; thus *caste*, *coste*, *burtē*, *putte*, *slitte*, were used instead of *casted*, *costed*, *burted*, *putted*, *slitted*.—2. By transposing the *d*.—This was very generally done in verbs whose last consonant was *d*, preceded by a vowel; thus instead of *reded*, *leded*, *spreded*, *bleded*, *feded*, it was usual to write *redde*, *ledde*, *spredde*, *bledde*, *fedde*.—And this same method of transposition, I apprehend, was originally applied to shorten those words which we now contract by syncope, as *lord*'d, *liv*'d, *smil*'d, *hear*'d, *fear*'d, which were anciently written *lowde*, *liwde*, *smilhe*, *herde*, *ferde*.—3. By transposing the *d* and changing it into *t*.—This method was used, 1. In verbs whose last consonant was *t*, preceded by a vowel; thus *leted*, *swetted*, *meted*, were changed into *lette*, *swette*, *mette*.—2. In verbs whose last consonant was *d*, preceded by a consonant; thus *bended*, *billed*, *girded*, were changed into *bente*, *bilte*, *girt*.—And generally in verbs in which *d* is changed into *t* I conceive that *d* was first transposed, so that *dwelled*, *passed*, *dremed*, *felde*, *kepde*, should be supposed to have been first changed into *dwelldē*, *passē*, *dremde*, *felde*, *kepde*, and then into *dwelte*, *passē*, *dremte*, *felte*, *kepte*.—4. The last method, together with a change of the radical vowel, will account for the analogy of a species of verbs, generally reputed anomalous, which form their past time and its participle (according to modern orthography) in *ght*. The process seems to have been thus, *Bring*, *bringed*, *brongde*, *brodge*, *brogte*; *Think*, *thinked*, *thonkde*, *thokde*, *thokte*; *Teebe*, *teebed*, *tackde*, *tachte*, &c.; only *fought*, from *fighted*, seems to have been formed by throwing away the *d*, (according to method 1.) and changing the radical vowel. See instances of similar contractions in the Francic language, *Hickes*, *Gram. Fr. Tb.* p. 66.

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where for the most part it terminated in *en*, as *bounden*, *founden*.

The greatest part of the auxiliary verbs were only in use in the present and past tenses of their indicative and subjunctive modes: they were inflected in those tenses like other verbs, and were prefixed to the infinitive mode of the verb to which they were auxiliary; I *shall* loven, I *will* or *woll* loven, I *may* or *moor* loven, I *can* or *con* loven, &c.; we *shullen* loven, we *willen* or *wollen* loven, we *mooren* loven, we *connen* loven, &c. In the past tense I (35) *shulde* loven, I *wolde* loven, I *mighte* or *moughte* loven, I *coulde* loven, &c.; we *shulden*, we *wolden*, we *mighden* or *moughten*, we *couden* loven, &c.

The auxiliary to *hauen* was a complete verb, and being prefixed to the participle of the past time was

past time and its participle differ from each other. Their varieties are too numerous to be particularly examined here, but I believe there are scarce any in which the deviations from the regular form will not appear to have been made by some method of contraction or abbreviation similar to those which have been pointed out in the last note among the regular verbs. The common termination of the participle in *en* is clearly a substitution for *ed*, probably for the sake of a more agreeable sound, and it is often shortened, as *ed* has been shewn to be, by transposition; thus *drawen*, *knowen*, *boren*, *sholen*, were changed into *drawene*, *knowene*, *borne*, *sholne*.

(35) *Shulde* and *wolde* are contracted from *shulled* and *wolled*, by transposing the *d* according to method 2. — *Mighte* and *moughte* are formed from *magbed* and *mogbed*, according to method 3. *magbed*, *magbde*, *maghte*; *Mogbed*, *mogbde*, *moghte*. — *Coulde* is from *conned*, by transposition of the *d*, and softening the *n* into *u*; it is often written *couthde*, and always so, I believe, when it is used as a participle. In the same manner Bishop Douglas and other Scottish writers use *begouth* as the preterit of *begin*; *begonnen*, *begonde*, *begonde*, *begouthde*.

used to express the preterperfect and preterpluperfect tenses; I *have* loved, thou *havest* or *hast* loved, he *hath* or *hath* loved; we *haven* or *han* loved, &c.; I *hadde* (36) loved, thou *haddest* loved, he *hadde* loved; we, ye, they, *hadden* loved.

The auxiliary to *ben* was also a complete verb, and being prefixed to the participle of the past time, with the help of the other auxiliary verbs, supplied the place of the whole passive voice, for which the Saxon language had no other form of expression; I *am*, thou *art*, he *is*, loved; we, ye, they, *aren* or *ben* loved; I *was*, thou *wast*, he *was*, loved; we, ye, they, *weren* loved (37).

5. With respect to the indeclinable parts of speech, it will be sufficient to observe here that many of them still remained pure Saxon: the greatest number had undergone a slight change of a letter or two, and the more considerable alterations by which some had been disfigured were fairly deducible from that propensity to abbreviation for which the inhabitants of

(36) *Hadde* is contracted from *haved*, as *made* is from *maked*. See *Hickes' Gram. Fr. Th.* p. 66.

(37) The verb *to do* is considered by Wallis and other later grammarians as an auxiliary verb. It is so used, though very rarely, by Chaucer. [See ver. 14742, 4.] He more commonly uses it transitively; [ver. 10074. *Do* sripen me, *Faites me depouiller*—ver. 10075. *Do* me drenche, *Faites me noyer*;] but still more frequently to save the repetition of a verb, [v. 26.;

His eyen twinkled in his head aright,
As *don* the sterres in a frosty night.]

Dr. Hickes has taken notice that *do* was used in this last manner by the Saxons, [*Gr. A. S.* p. 77,] and so was *faire* by the French, and indeed is still. It must be confessed that the exact power which *do*, as an auxiliary, now has in our language is not easy to be defined, and still less to be accounted for from analogy.

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this island have been long remarkable, though perhaps not more justly so than their neighbours.

§ 4. Such was in general the state of the Saxon part of the English Language when Chaucer began to write. Let us take a short view of the accessions which it may be supposed to have received at different times from Normandy.

As the language of our ancestors was complete in all its parts, and had served them for the purposes of discourse, and even of composition in various kinds, long before they had any intimate acquaintance with their French neighbours, they had no call from necessity (and consequently no sufficient inducement) to alter its original and radical constitutions, or even its customary forms; accordingly we have just seen that in all the essential parts of speech the characteristic features of the Saxon idiom were always preserved, and we shall see presently that the crowds of French words which from time to time were imported were themselves made subject, either immediately or by degrees to the laws of that idiom.

§ 5. The words which were thus imported were chiefly nouns substantive, adjectives, verbs, and participles. The adverbs which are derived from French adjectives seem to have been formed from them after they were anglicised, as they have all the Saxon termination *lich* or *ly* (38); instead of the French *ment*. As to the other indeclinable parts of speech, our language, being sufficiently rich in its own stores, has borrowed nothing from France except perhaps an interjection or two.

(38) As *rarely*, *continually*, *veraily*, *bravely*, &c. which correspond to the French adverbs *rarement*, *continuellement*, *véritablement*, *bravement*, &c.

The nouns substantive in the French language (as in all the other languages derived from the Latin) had lost their cases long before the time of which we are treating, but such of them as were naturalized here seem all to have acquired a genitive case, according to the corrupted Saxon form which has been stated above. Their plural number was also new modelled to the same form if necessary, for in nouns ending in *e* feminine, as the greater part of the French did, the two languages were already agreed; nom. *flour*, gen. *floures*, plur. *floures*; nom. *dame*, gen. *dames*, plur. *dames*.

On the contrary the adjectives which at home had a distinction of gender and number, upon their naturalization here seem to have been generally stripped of both, and reduced to the simple state of the English adjective, without case, gender, or number.

The French verbs were obliged to lay aside all their differences of conjugation; *accorder*, *suffrir*, *recevoir*, *descendre*, were regularly changed into—*accorden*, *suffren*, *receiven*, *descenden*. They brought with them only two tenses, the present and the past; nor did they retain any singularity of inflection which could distinguish them from other verbs of Saxon growth.

The participle indeed of the present time, in some verbs, appears to have still preserved its original French form, as *usant*, *suffisant*, &c.

The participle of the past time adopted almost universally the regular Saxon termination in *ed*, as *accorded*, *suffred*, *received*, *descended*: it even frequently assumed the prepositive particle *ge*, (or *y*, as it was latterly written) which among the Saxons was very generally, though not peculiarly, prefixed to that participle.

§ 6. Upon the whole, I believe it may be said with truth that at the time which we are considering

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though the form of our language was still Saxon the matter was in a great measure French. The novelties of all kinds which the revolution in 1066 had introduced demanded a large supply of new terms, and our ancestors very naturally took what they wanted from the language which was already familiar to a considerable part of the community. Our poets in particular (who have generally the principal share in modelling a language) found it their interest to borrow as many words as they conveniently could from France. As they were for a long time chiefly translators, this expedient saved them the trouble of hunting for correspondent terms in Saxon. The French words too, being the remains of a polished language, were smoother, and slid easier into metre, than the Saxon, which had never undergone any regular cultivation: their final syllables chimed together with more frequent consonancies, and their accents were better adapted to rhyming poetry. But more of this in the next part.

PART THE THIRD.

BEFORE we proceed in the third and last part of this Essay, in which we are to consider the Versification of Chaucer, it may be useful to premise a few observations upon the state of English poetry antecedent to his time.

§ 1. That the Saxons had a species of writing which differed from their common prose, and was considered by themselves as poetry (39), is very cer-

(39) The account which Bede has given of Cædmon [*Eccl. Hist.* l. iv. c. 24.] is sufficient to prove this: he repeatedly calls the compositions of Cædmon *carmina*—*poemata*—and in one place *versus*; which words in the Saxon translation are ren-

tain, but it seems equally certain that their compositions of that kind were neither divided into verses of a determinate number of syllables, nor embellished with what we call rhyme (40). There are no traces,

dered *leop--leop ronge*, or *ronge*--and *pen*; and *ars canendi* is translated *leop cnaet* or *rang cnaet*.—After also, in his life of Alfred, speaks of *Saxonica poemata*, and *Saxonica carmina*, [p. 16, 43.] and most probably the *Cantilene per successiones temporum detrite*, which Malmesb. cites in his Hist. l. ii. p. 52, were in the Saxon language. The same writer [l. v. de Pontif. ed. Gale,] mentions a *carmen triviale* of Aldhelm (the author of the Latin poem *de Virginitate*, who died in 709) as *adhuc vulgo cantatum*; and he quotes the testimony of King Alfred, in his *Liber Manualis*, or *Hand-boc*, as saying “that no one was ever equal to Aldhelm in English poetry.”

(40) Both these circumstances are evident from the most cursory view of the several specimens of Saxon poetry which Hickes has exhibited in his *Gram. Ang. Sax.* c. xxi, and they are allowed by that learned writer himself. Unwilling however, as it should seem, to leave his favourite language without some system of Verification, he supposes that the Saxons observed the quantity of syllables in their verses, “tho’ perhaps,” he adds, “not so strictly as the heroick Greek and Latin poets.”—He gives three reasons for this supposition; 1. Because they did not use rhyme. 2. Because they transposed their words in such an unnatural manner; “Hoc autem cur facerent Anglo-Saxonum poetæ, nulla, ut videtur, alia assignari causa potest, quam quæ, ut idem facerent, Græci et Latini poetæ coegit; nempe metri lex.” 3. Because they had a great number of dissyllable and polysyllable words which were fit for metrical feet.—However specious these reasons may appear they are certainly far from conclusive, even if we had no monuments of Saxon poetry remaining; but in the present case, I apprehend, the only satisfactory proof would have been to have produced, out of the great heap of poetical compositions in the Saxon language, some regular metrical

I believe, to be found of either rhyme or metre in our language till some years after the conquest; so that

verses, that is, some portions of words similar to each other in the nature and order of their component syllables, and occurring either in a continued series or at stated intervals. If all external proofs of the nature of the Roman poetry were lost, a few verses of Virgil or Horace would be sufficient to convince us that their metres were regulated by the quantity of syllables; and if Cædmon had really written in a metre regulated by the quantity of syllables, a few of his lines must have afforded us the same conviction with respect to the general laws of his Versification. For my own part, I confess myself unable to discover any material distinction of the Saxon poetry from prose, except a greater pomp of diction and a more stately kind of march. Our ancestors affected a certain pomp of style in all their compositions; "Angil" (says *Maimbourg*, l. i. p. 13,) "*pompaticè dicere amant.*" And this affectation I suspect was the true cause of their so frequently inverting the natural order of their words, especially in poetry. The obscurity arising from these inversions had the appearance of pomp: that they were not owing to the constraint of any metrical laws (as Hickes supposes) may be presumed from their being commonly used in prose, and even in Latin prose, by Saxon writers. Ethelwerd, an historian descended in the fifth degree from King Ethelred, [*Inter Script. post Bedam*, p. 831—850.] is full of them. The following passage of his history, if literally translated, would read very like Saxon poetry: "Abtrahuntur
"tunc | serventes fide | anno in eodem | Hibernia stirpe |
"tres viri lecti | | furthm consuunt lembum | taurinus byr-
"sis | | alimentum sibi | hebdomadarium suppleat; | ele-
"vant dies | per vela septem | totidemque noctes." &c.-----
We do not see any marks of studied alliteration in the old Saxon poetry, so that we might attribute the introduction of that practice to the Danes, if we were certain that it made a part of the Scaldick Versification at the time of the Danish settlements in England.——However that may have been Giraldus Cambrensis [*Deser. Camb.* p. 889.] speaks of *anonyma*

I should apprehend we must have been obliged for both to the Normans, who very early (41) distinction, which he describes to be what we call *alliteration*, as the favourite rhetorical figure of both the Welsh and English in his time: "Adeo igitur hoc verborum ornatu duæ nationes, "Angli scilicet et Cambri, in omni sermone exquisito utuntur, "ut nihil ab his eleganter dictum, nullum nisi rude et agreite "censeatur eloquium, si non schematis hujus limâ plene fuerit expolitum." It is plain that alliteration must have had very powerful charms for the ears of our ancestors, as we find that the Saxon poetry, by the help of this embellishment alone, even after it had laid aside its pompous phraseology, was able to maintain itself without rhyme or metre for several centuries. See *Dr. Percy's Essay on the Metre of Pierce Ploughman's Vision. Rel. of Ancient Poetry*, vol. ii.

(41) I cannot find that the French antiquaries have been able to produce any poetry, in any of the dialects of their language, of an earlier date than the conquest of England, or indeed than the beginning of the 12th century. However we read of a Thibaud de Vernun, canon of Rouen, who before the year 1053, "multorum gesta Sanctorum, sed et Sti Wandregesili, a "sua latinitate transtulit, atque in communis lingue usum "satis facunde refudit, ac sic, *ad quamdam tinnuli rythmi similitudinem, urbanas ex illis cantilenas edidit.*" [*De Mirac. Sti Fulfranni. Autore Monacho Fontanell. Temp. Will. I. ap. Dacherii Aſa SS. Ord. Ben. t. iii. p. 379.*] It is probable too that the *Vulgares Cantus*, which according to Raimond de Agiles [*Gesta Dei*, p. 180,] were composed against Arnoulph, a chaplain of the Duke of Normandy, in the first croisade, were in the French language; and there can be little doubt that William IX. Duke of Aquitain, upon his return from Jerusalem in 1101, made use of his native tongue when "miserias captivitatis suæ, "erat jocundus et lepidus, multotiens retulit rhythmicis versibus cum facietis modulacionibus." *Ord. Vital. l. x. p. 793.* ---The history of the taking of Jerusalem, which is said to have been written by the Chevalier Gregoire Bechada of Tours in Limoges, "maternâ linguâ rythmo vulgari, ut populus "pleniter intelligeret," [*Labbe, Bibl. Nov. t. ii. p. 296.*] has

guished themselves by poetical performances in their vulgar tongue.

The metres which they used, and which we seem to have borrowed from them, were plainly copied from the Latin (42) rythmical verses, which in the

not yet been brought to light; so that probably the oldest French poem of any length now extant is a translation of the *Bestiarius* by Philippe de Thaun, it being addressed to Alix (Alixizet of Louvain) the second queen of our Henry I.—There is a copy of this poem among the *Cotton mss. Nero. A. v.* The authors of the *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, t. ix. p. 173--90, suppose it to have been written about 1125, that is, thirty years before *Le Brut*, which Fauchet had placed at the head of his list of French poems.—I shall take occasion in another place to shew that the real author of *Le Brut* was Wace, (the same who wrote the *Roman de Rou*) and not Wifface, as Fauchet calls him.

(42) The Latin rythmical verses resembled the metrical in the number of syllables only, without any regard to quantity. "Arma cano virumque qui primus Trojæ aboris," would pass for a very good rythmical hexameter. The greatest part however of these compositions were in imitation of the iambick and trochaick metres; and in them, if the accents fell luckily, the unlearned ear would often be as well pleased as if the laws of quantity were observed. The two rythmical hymns quoted by Beda [*De Metris*, edition Putsch. p. 2380,] are sufficient to prove this. The first, he observes, "ad imitæ iambici metri pulcherrime factus est."

Orox æterne Domine
Rerum creator omnem, &c.

The other is "ad formam metri Trochaici."

Apparebit repentina dies magna Domini.
Fur obscura voluit nocte inaptos viros occupans.

In the former of these hymns *Domine*, to a modern ear at least, sounds as well as *nomine*; and in the latter *dies* and *velut*, being accented upon their first syllables, affect us no otherwise than *dices* and *velum* would have done.—From such Latin

declension of that language were current in various forms among those who either did not understand or did not regard the true quantity of syllables; and the practice of rhyming (43) is probably to be deduced

rythms, and chiefly those of the iambick form, the present poetical measures of all the nations of Roman Europe are clearly derived. Instead of long and short syllables, the feet of our poetry are composed of syllables accented and unaccented, or rather of syllables strongly and less strongly accented, and hence it is that we have so little variety of feet, and consequently of metres; because the possible combinations of syllables accented and unaccented are from the nature of speech much more limited in point of number than the combinations of long and short syllables were in the Greek and Latin languages.

(43) We see evident marks of a fondness for rhyme in the hymns of S. Ambrosius and S. Damascus, as early as the 4th century. One of the hymns of Damascus, which begins

Martyris ecce dies Agathæ
Virginis emicat exima, &c.

is regularly rhymed throughout. Prudentius, who had a more classical taste, seems studiously to have avoided rhymes; but Sedulius and Fortunatus, in the 5th and 6th centuries, use them frequently in their hymns. [See their works, and an hymn of the latter, *ap. Fabric. Bib. Med. Ætat. v. Fortunatus.*]—The learned Muratori, in his Dissertation *de Rhythmicâ Veterum Poesi*, [*Antiq. Med. Ævi. Dissert. xl.*] has collected together a vast heap of examples, which prove that rhymes were very generally used in hymns, sequences, and other religious compositions in Latin, in the 7th, 8th, and 9th, centuries; so that for my own part I think it as probable that the poets in the vulgar languages (who first appeared about the 9th century) borrowed their rhymes from the Latin poetry of that age, as it is evident that they did the forms of their Versification.----Otfrid of Weissenberg, the earliest rhymers that is known in any of the modern languages, about the year 870, calls rhyme, in the style of the Latin grammarians, *Schema omacronaleutou*.

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from the same original, as we find that practice to have prevailed in ecclesiastical hymns, and other compositions in Latin, some centuries before Otfrid of Weissenberg, the first known rhymers in any of the vulgar European dialects.

§ 2. I wish it were in my power to give a regular history of the progress which our ancestors made in this new style of Versification; but (44) except a few

[*Pref. ad Liubert, ap. Schilter. Thes. Antiq. Teuton. t.i. p. 11.*] And when the monk who has been cited in note 41 says that Thibaud de Vernun composed his songs *ad quomdam tinnuli rythmi similitudinem*, he must mean I think that he composed them in imitation of [Latin] jingling rhythm. I say *Latin* (or at least some *foreign*) rhythm, because otherwise he would rather have said *in rythmo tinnulo*. The addition of the epithet *tinnulus* seems to shew plainly enough that *rythmus* alone did not then signify what we call *rhyme*.

(44) William of Malmesbury [*de Gest. Pont. Angl. l. iii. p. 271.*] has preserved two rhyming verses of Aldred Archbishop of York, which that prelate threw out against one Urse, Sheriff of Worcester-shire, not long after the conquest; "Hatest thou Urse——Have thou God's curse." *Vocaris Ursus——Habeas Dei maledictionem*. Malmesbury says that he inserts this English, *quod Latina verba non sicut Anglica concinnitati respondent*. The concinnity, I suppose, must have consisted in the rhyme, and would hardly have been thought worth repeating if rhyme in English had not then been a novelty.----- The lines in the Saxon Chronicle, to which I mean to refer, are in p. 191. *ed. Giff.* The passage begins,

Eartelap he let pyncean.

Jeapne men yride pnencean——

All the lines are not in rhyme, but I shall set down a few in English characters which I think could not have chimed together so exactly by mere accident.

That he nam be rihte

And mid mycelan un-rihte

lines in the Saxon Chronicle upon the death of William the Conqueror, which seem to have been intended for verses of the modern fashion, and a short Canticle which, according to Matthew Paris (45), the blessed Virgin was pleased to dictate to Godric, an hermit near Durham, I have not been able to discover any attempts at rhyming poetry which can with

Of his leode
For litle neode—
He sette mycel deor-fith,
And he legde lagn ther with—
He forbead tha heortas,
Swylce eac tha baras;
Swa swithe he lufode tha hea-deor
Swylce he wære heora fæder.
Eac he sette be than baran,
That hi mosten freo faran—

The concluding lines are,

Se æl-mihtiga God
Kith his saule mild-heortnisse
And do him his synna forgiðesse.

The writer of this part of the Chronicle (as he tells us himself, p. 189.) had seen the Conqueror.

(45) *Hist. Angl.* p. 100. Godric died in 1170, so that according to tradition the Canticle was prior to that period: the first stanza being incorrectly printed I shall only transcribe the last-----

Seinte Marie, Cristes bur,
Meidenes clemhad, modes flur,
Dille mine seunen, rice in min mod,
Bringe me to winne with selfe God—

Hoc canticum (says M. P.) *potest hoc modo in Latinum transferri.*

Sancta Maria, Christi thalamus,
virginis puritas, matris flos,
deice mea crimina, regna in mente mea,
duc me ad felicitatem cum solo Deo.

Upon the authority of this translation I have altered *pinne* (as it is in the print) to *winne*. The Saxon *p* is often mistaken for a *p*.

probability be referred to an earlier period than the reign of Henry II. In that reign Layamon (46), a priest of Ernleye near Severn, as he calls himself, translated (chiefly from) the French of Wace (47)

(46) This work of Layamon is extant among the *Cotton, mss. Cal. A. ix.* A much later copy, in which the author by a natural corruption was called *Larweman*, was destroyed by the fire. There is an account of both copies in Wanley's *Cat. mss. Septent.* p. 228. and p. 237. ----- The following short extract from fol. 7, 8, containing an account of the sirens which Brutus met with in his voyage, will serve to support what is said in the text of this author's intermixing rhymes with his prose:

Ther heo funden the Merminnen,
That beoth deor of muchele ginnen.
Wismen hit thuncet ful iwis,
Blacoth theon gurdie his thunceth sife
Theos habbeth swa murie song,
Ne heo tha dri na swa long,
Ne bih na man weri
Heora songes to heran -----

(47) The French clerk whom Layamon professes to have followed in his history is called by Wanley [*Cat. mss. Sept. p. 228,*] *Watz*, as if poor *Maître Wace* were doomed to have his name perpetually mistaken. Fauchet, and a long string of French antiquaries, have agreed to call him *Wace*. I shall here, in justice to *Maître Wace*, (for whom I have a great respect not only as a very ancient but as a very ingenious rhymér) state my reasons shortly for believing that he was the real author of that translation in French verse of Geoffrey of Monmouth's romance which is commonly called *Le Brut*. ---- In the first place, his name is distinctly written in the text of three mss. of very considerable antiquity: two of them are in the Museum, *viz. Cotton, Vitell. A. x. and Reg. 13 A. xxi.*: the third is at Cambridge, in the library of Bennet College, n. 58. In a fourth ms. also in the Museum, *Harl. 6508*, it is written *Gazoe* and *Gace*, by a substitution of G for W, very usual in the French language. ---- Secondly, in the ms. above-mentioned of Layamon's history, *Cal. A. ix*, if I may trust my own

a fabulous history of the Britons entitled *Le Brut*, which Wace himself, about the year 1155, had trans-

eyes the name is *Wace*, and not *Wate*, as Wanley read it. The Saxon τ is not very unlike a c. What Layamon has said further, "that this Wace was a French clerk, and presented his "book to Alienor the queen of Henry," [the Second] agrees perfectly well with the date of *Le Brut*, (in 1155, according to all the copies) and with the account which Wace himself, in his *Roman de Rou*, has given of his attachment to Henry.----- Thirdly, in a subsequent translation of *Le Brut*, which was made by Robert of Brunne in the beginning of the 14th century, he repeatedly names *Mayster Wace* as the author (or rather translator from the Latin) of the French history. See *Hearne's App. to Pref. to Peter Langtoft*, p. 98.---In opposition to this strong evidence in favour of Wace we have nothing material except the ms. of *Le Brut* quoted by Fauchet, [*de la Langue Francoise*, l. ii.] in which according to his citation the author is called *Wflace*. The later French writers who have called him so, I apprehend, have only followed Fauchet. The reader will judge whether it is not more probable that the writer of the ms. or even Fauchet himself, may have made a little slip in this matter, than that so many mss. as I have quoted above, and the successive testimonies of Layamon and Robert of Brunne, should have concurred in calling the author of *Le Brut* *Wace*, if that had not been his true name.-----I will just add that *La vie de Saint Nicholas*, which is frequently quoted by Hickes, [*Gr. A. S.* p. 146, 149, *et al.*] was probably a work of this same Wace, as appears from the following passage, [*ms. Bodl.* 1687, v. 17 from the end,]

Ci faut le livre mestre Guace,
Qu'il ad de Saint Nicholas fait,
De Latin en Romanz esleit
A Oiberd le fiz Thieut,
Qui Saint Nicholas mout amout.-----

And I should suspect that *Le Martyre de St. George en vers Francois par Robert Guaco*, mentioned by M. Lebeuf as extant in the Bibl. Colbert. Cod, 3745, [*Mém. de l'Acad. D. J.* 2

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lated from the Latin of Geffrey of Monmouth. 'Tho' the greatest part of this work of Layamon resemble the old Saxon poetry, without rhyme or metre, yet he often intermixes a number of short verses of unequal lengths, but rhyming together pretty exactly, and in some places he has imitated not unsuccessfully the regular octosyllable measure of his French original.

§ 3. It may seem extraordinary, after these proofs that the art of rhyming was not unknown or unpractised in this country in the time of Henry II. that we should be obliged to search through a space of above an hundred years without being able to meet with a single maker of English rhymes whom we know to have written in that interval. The case I suspect to have been this. The scholars of that age (and there were many who might fairly be called so in the English dominions abroad (48) as well as at home) affected to write only (49) in Latin, so that we do not

B. L. t. xvii. p. 731,] ought to be ascribed to the same author, as *Guaco* is a very strange name. The Christian name of Wace was Robert. See *Huet, Orig. de Caen*, p. 412.

(48) The following passage of Roger de Hoveden [p. 672,] gives a striking description of the extent of the English dominions in the time of Richard I.; "Sciendum est quod tota terra, quæ est ab Anglia usque in Hispaniam, secus mare, videlicet Normannia, Britannia, Pictavia, est de dominio Regis Angliæ." The kings of France at that time were not possessed of an inch of territory upon the coasts of the ocean.

(49) It will be sufficient to name John of Salisbury, Peter of Blois, Joseph of Exeter, Gerald Barry, Nigell Wireker, Geffrey Vinsauf: I should add to this list Walter Map, if there were not a tradition, not entirely destitute of probability, that he was the author of the *Roman de Saint Graal* in French. I find this in an old ms. of Tristan, *Bib. Reg. 20. D. ii. p. antep.* "Quant Boort ot conte laventure del Saint Graal, teles come ele,

find that they ever composed in verse or prose in any other language. On the other hand they who meant to recommend themselves by their poetry to the favour of the great took care to write in French; the only language which their patrons understood; and hence it is that we see so many French poems (50)

“ estoient avenues, eles furent mises en escrit, gardees en la-
 “ mere de Salibieres, dont Mestre Galtier Map fistreit a faire
 “ son livre du Saint Graal, por l’amor du roy Herri son seignior,
 “ qui fist le storie tralater del Latin en Romanz.” The adventure of the Saint Graal is plainly written upon a very different plan from the other romances of the Round Table, and is likely enough to have come from an ecclesiastick, though rather, I confess, from a graver one than Walter Map may be supposed to have been. The French romance from which our romance called *Morte d’Arthur* is translated seems to be an injudicious jumble of *Le Brut*, *Lancelot*, *Tristan*, the *Saint Graal*, and some other romances of leis note, which were all, I apprehend, originally separate works.

(50) *Le Besoindre*, by Philippe de Thaun, addressed to Queen Adeliza, *Le Brut*, and *Le Roman de Rou* by Wace, have been mentioned above. Besides the *Roman de Rou* there is another Chronicle of Normandy in French verse by Maitre Beneit, compiled by order of Henry II. ms. *Harl.* 1717. The same Beneit was perhaps the author of the *Vie de St Thomas*, ms. *Harl.* 3775, though he there calls himself

Frere Beneit, le pecheour,
 oves les neire drac—

At the end of a copy of *Le Brut*, *Bibl. Reg.* 13. A. xxi, there is a continuation of the history to the death of William II. in the same metre, by a Geisrei Gaimar, which escaped the observation of Mr. Casley; and at the end of another copy, *Vitel.* A. x, the history is continued by an anonymous author to the accession of King John.—Richard I. composed himself in French: a specimen of his poetry has been published by Mr. Walpole, *Cat. of Royal Authors*, v. i.; and his Chancellor, William Bishop of Ely, (who, as has been observed before, was totally ig-

See *Tranſla*
 P. 569.
 (52) The

about that time either addressed directly to the principal persons at the English court, or at least written on such subjects as we may suppose to have been most likely to engage their attention. Whatever therefore of English poetry was produced in this infancy of the art being probably the work of illiterate authors, and circulating only among the vulgar (51), we need not be much surpris'd that no more of it has been transmitted down to posterity.

§ 4. The learned Hickes however has pointed out to us two very curious pieces which may with probability be referred to this period. The first of them is a paraphrase of the gospel histories, entitled *Ormulum* (52), by one Orm or Ormin. It seems to have norant of the English language) was by no means behindhand with his master in his encouragement of French poets; for of this bishop the passage in Hoveden is to be understood which Mr. Walpole has applied to the king himself; it is part of a letter of Hugh Bishop of Coventry, who, speaking of the Bishop of Ely, says that he, "ad augmentum et famam sui nominis, "emendicata carmina et rythmos adulatorios comparabat, "et de regno Francorum cantores et jocularos muneribus "allexerat, ut de illo canerent in plateis; et jam dicebatur "ubique, quod non erat talis in orbe." *Hoveden*, p. 103.

(51) To these causes we may probably impute the loss of those songs upon Hereward (the last perhaps of the Saxon heroes) which according to Ingulphus were sung about the streets in his time. *Hist. Croyl.* p. 68. Robert of Brunne also mentions a rhyme concerning Gryme the fisher, the founder of Grymesby, Hanelok the Dane, and his wife Goldeburgh, daughter to a King Athelwold, who all now, together with their bard,

—illacrymabiles
Urgentur ignotique longa
Nocte.—

See *Translation of Peter of Langtoft*, p. 25, and *Camden's Brit.* p. 569.

(52) The *Ormulum* seems to be placed by Hickes among the

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been considered as mere prose by Hickes and by Wanley, who have both given large extracts from it; but I apprehend every reader who has an ear for metre will easily perceive that it is written very exactly in verses of fifteen syllables, without rhyme, in imitation of the most common species of the Latin

first writings after the conquest, [*Gram. Ang. Sax.* c. xxii. p. 165,] but I confess I cannot conceive it to have been earlier than the reign of Henry II. There is a peculiarity in the author's orthography which consists in doubling the consonants; *e. g.* brother he writes *brotherr*; after, *afferr*, &c. He has done this by design, and charges those who shall copy his book to be very careful to write those letters twice which he has written so, as otherwise, he assures them, "they will not write the word right." Hickes has taken notice of this peculiarity, but has not attempted to explain the author's reasons for it; and indeed without a more perfect knowledge than we now probably can have of the Saxon pronunciation they seem totally inexplicable. In the few lines which I think it necessary to quote here as a specimen of the metre, I shall venture (first begging Ormin's pardon for disregarding his injunction) to leave out the superfluous letters, and I shall also, for my own ease as well as that of the reader, transcribe them in modern characters. The first lines of Wanley's extract from *ms. Bod. Thomas. I.* [*Cat. Codd. mss. Septent.* p. 59,] will answer my purpose as well as any other.

Nu, brother Walter, brother min after the fleshes kinde,
And brother min i Crisendom thurh fullht and thurh trowthe,
And brother min i Godes hus yet o the thride wise,
Thurh that wit hafren taken ba an reguel boc to folghen
Under kanunkes-had and lif swa sum Sant Awstin sette,
Ic hafe don swa sum thu bad, and *forbed* (a) te thin wille,
Ic hafe wend intil English Godspelles halighe lare,
After that litte wit that me min Drihten hafeth lched—

The reader will observe, that in calling these verses of fifteen syllables I consider the words—*kinde, trowthe, wise, sette, wille, lare*—as dissyllables-----The laws of metre require that they

(a) *r. forbed*, *ms.*

tetrameter iambic. The other piece (53), which is a moral poem upon old age, &c. is in rhyme, and in a metre much resembling the former, except that the verse of fifteen syllables is broken into two, of which the first should regularly contain eight and the second seven syllables; but the metre is not so exactly observed (at least in the copy which Hickes has followed) as it is in the Ormulum.

§ 5. In the next interval, from the latter end of should be so considered as much as *folghen* and *lened*; and for the same reason *ibride*, in ver. 3, and *baje*, in ver. 6 and 7, are to be pronounced as consisting of two syllables.—It is the more extraordinary that neither Hickes nor Wanley should have perceived that Ormin wrote in metre, as he himself mentions his having added words for the sake of *filling* his *rhyme* or *verse*, for he calls it by both those names in the following passages;

Ich hafe sett her o this bock among Godspelles wordes

All thurh me seifen manig word, the *rk* me swa to *fillen*—

And again,

And ic ne mihte noht min *fers* ay with Godspelles wordes

Well *fillen* all, and all forthi shalde ic well ofte nede

Among Godspelles wordes don min word, min *fers* to *fillen*—

It is scarce necessary to remark that rhyme is here to be understood in its original sense, as denoting the whole verse, and not merely the consonancy of the final syllables. In the second quotation *fers* or *verse*, is substituted for it as a synonymous term. Indeed I doubt whether in the time of Ormin the word *rhyme* was, in any language, used singly to convey the idea of consonant terminations.

(53) A large extract from this poem has been printed by Hickes, [*Gram. Ang. Sax.* c. xxiv. p. 222,] but evidently from very incorrect MSS. It begins thus;

Ich am nu elder thanne ic wes

A wintre and ee a lore;

Ich ealdi more thanne ic dede,

Mi wit oghte to bi more.

the reign of Henry III. to the middle of the fourteenth century, when we may suppose Chaucer was beginning to write, the number of English rhymers seems to have increased very much. Besides several whose names we know (54), it is probable that a great part of the anonymous authors, or rather translators (55), of the popular poems which (from their

(54) Robert of Gloucester and Robert of Brunne have been mentioned already. — To these may be added Richard Rolle, the hermit of Hampole, who died in 1349, after having composed a large quantity of English rhymes. See *Tanner, Bib. Brit. art. Hampole*. — Laurence Minot, who has left a collection of poems upon the principal events of the former parts of the reign of Edward III. *ms. Cotton, Galba. E. ix.* — Within the same period flourished the two poets who are mentioned with great commendations by Robert of Brunne [*App. to Pref. to Peter Langt.* p. xcix.] under the names of Erceldoun and of Kendale. We have no memorial, that I know, remaining of the latter besides this passage; but the former I take to have been the famous Thomas Leirmouth of Erceldoun, (or Ersilton, as it is now called, in the shire of Merch) who lived in the time of Edward I. and is generally distinguished by the honourable addition of *The Rhymour*. As the learned editor of *Ancient Scottish poems*, Edinburgh 1770, has for irrefragable reasons deprived this Thomas of a prophesy in verse which had usually been ascribed to him, [See *Mackenzie, art. Thomas Rhymour*.] I am inclined to make him some amends, by attributing to him a romance of Sir Tristrem, of which Robert of Brunne, an excellent judge! (in the place above cited) says,

Over gestes it has th'eileem
Over all that is or was,
If men it sayd as made Thomas.

(55) See Dr. Percy's curious Catalogue of English metrical romances, prefixed to the third volume of *Reliques of Ancient Poesy*. I am inclined to believe that we have no English romance prior to the age of Chaucer which is not a translation

having been originally written in the Roman or French language) were called *Romances* flourished about this

or imitation of some earlier French romance. The principal of those which being built upon English stories bid the fairest for having been originally composed in English are also extant in French. A considerable fragment of *Hornchilde* (or *Dan Horn*, as he is there called) is to be found in French alexandrines in ms. *Harl.* 527. The first part of *Guy of Warwick* is in French, in the octosyllable metre, in ms. *Harl.* 5775, and the last part in the same language and metre in ms. *Bib. Reg.* 8 F. ix. How much may be wanting I have not had opportunity to examine. I have never seen *Bevis* in French; but *Du Fresnoy* in his *Biblioth. des Romans*, t. ii. p. 241, mentions a ms. of *Le Roman de Beuves de Hautonnes*, and another of *Le Roman de Beuves et Rostane, en rime*; and the Italians, who were certainly more likely to borrow from the French than from the English language, had got among them a romance *di Duoro d'Antona*, before the year 1345. *Quattro, Storia della Poesia*, t. vi. p. 542.---However, I think it extremely probable that these three romances, though originally written in French, were composed in England, and perhaps by Englishmen, for we find that the general currency of the French language here engaged several of our own countrymen to use in it in their compositions. *Peter of Langtoft* may be reckoned a dubious instance, as he is said by some to have been a Frenchman; but *Robert Grosseteste*, the famous Bishop of Lincoln in the time of Henry III. was a native of Suffolk, and yet he wrote his *Chyseau d'Amours* and his *Manuel des Pechees* in French. [Tanner's *Bib. Brit.* and *Hearn's Pref. to Rob. of Gloucester*, p. 58.]---There is a translation of *Cato* in French verse by *Helis de Guincestre*, *i. e.* Winchester, ms. *Harl.* 4388, and a romance also in French verse, which I suppose to be the original of the English *Ipomedon* [*Percy's Cur.* n. 22.] by *Hue de Rotelande*, is to be found in ms. *Cotton, Vesp. A. vii.*---A French dialogue in verse, ms. *Bod.* 3904, entitled *La plainte par entre mis Sire Henry de Lary Comte de Nichole et Sire Walter de Byndesworth par la croiserie en la terre Seinte*, was most probably

time. It is unnecessary to enter into particulars here concerning any of them, as they do not appear to

composed by the latter, who has also left us another work in French prose. [See this article in *Tanner, Bibl. Brit.*]—Even as late as the time of Chaucer Gower wrote his *Speculum Meditantis* in French, but whether in verse or prose is uncertain. John Stowe, who was a diligent searcher after mss. had never seen this work, [*Annals*, p. 326,] nor does either Bale or Pitts set down the beginning of it, as they generally do of the books which they have had in their hands. However one French poem of Gower's has been preserved. In ms. *Harl.* 3869, it is connected with the *Confessio Amantis* by the following rubrick; "Puisqu'il ad dit cidevant en Englois par voie d'essample la
"sotie de celui qui par amours aime par especial, dirra ore
"apres en Francois a tout le monde en general une traitie se-
"lonc les auctours, pour essampler les amants marriez, au fin
"q'ils la foi de leurs seints espousailles pourront par fine loialte
"garder, et al honneur de dieu salvement tenir." Pr. *Le crea-
tour de toute creature*. It contains 55 stanzas of 7 verses each, in the last of which is the following apology for the language;

Al' universite de tout le monde
Johan Gower ceste Balade envoie,
Et si jeo nai de Francois la faconde,
Pardonez moi qe jeo de ceo forsvoie;
Jeo suis Englois, si quier par tiele voie
Estre excuse.

Chaucer himself seems to have had no great opinion of the performances of his countrymen in French, [*Prol. to Test. of Love*, ed. 1542.] "Certes," (says he) "there ben some that
"speke thyr poynt mater in Frenche, of whyche speche the
"Frenche men have as good a fantasye as we have in hearing
"of French mennes Englyshe." And he afterwards concludes with his usual good sense; "Let then clerkes endyten in La-
"tyn, for they have the propertye of science and the know-
"inge in that facultye, and lette Frenchmen in theyr Frenche
"also endyte theyr queynt termes, for it is kyndly to theyr
"mouthes, and let us shewe our fantasyes in suche wordes as
"we lerneden of our dames tonge."

have invented or imported from abroad any new modes of Versification by which the art could be at all advanced (56), or even to have improved those

(56) It was necessary to qualify the assertion that the rhymers of this period "did not invent or import from abroad any new "modes of Versification," as in fact Robert of Brunne (in the passage referred to in n. 54,) has mentioned three or four sorts of verse different from any which we have hitherto met with, and which appear to have been much cultivated (if not introduced) by the writers who flourished a little before himself: he calls them Cowee, Strangere, Enterlace, and Bafton. Mr. Bridges, in a sensible letter to Thomas Hearne [*App. to Pref. to Peter Langt.* p. ciii,] pointed out these terms as particularly needing an explanation; but Thomas chose rather to stuff his book with accounts of the nunnery at Little Gidding, &c. which cost him only the labour of transcribing. There can be little doubt, I think, that the rhymes called Cowée and Enterlacée were derived from the *Versus Caudati* and *Interlaqueati* of the Latin rhymers of that age. Though Robert of Brunne, in his Prologue, professes not to attempt these elegancies of composition, yet he has intermixed several passages in rhyme Couwée; [See p. 266, 273, 6, 7, 8, 9, *et al.*] and almost all the latter part of his work from the conquest is written in rhyme Enterlacée, each couplet rhyming in the middle as well as at the end. [This was the nature of the *Versus Interlaqueati*, according to the following specimen, *ms. Harl.* 1002. ;

Plaufus Greecorum | lux eccis et via claudis |
Incola celorum | virgo dignissima laudis.]

I cannot pretend to define the exact form of the rhyme called Bafton, but I dare say it received its appellation from the Carmelite Robert Bafton, a celebrated Latin rhymer in the reigns of Edward I. and II. [See *Tanner, Bibl. Brit. in v.* and *Hearne's Pref. to Fordun*, p. 226, *et seq.*] His verses upon the battle of Bannockburn, in 1313, are printed in the Appendix to Fordun, p. 1570: they afford instances of all the whimsical combinations of rhymes which can well be conceived to find a place

which were before in use. On the contrary, as their works were intended for the ear more than for the eye, to be recited rather than read, they were apt to be more attentive to their rhymes than to the exactness of their metres, from a presumption, I suppose, that the defect or redundancy of a syllable might be easily covered in the recitation, especially if accompanied, as it often was, by some musical instrument.

§ 6. Such was, in general, the state of English poetry at the time when Chaucer probably made his first essays. The use of rhyme was established, not exclusively, (for the author of *The Visions of Pierce Ploughman* wrote after the year 1350 (57) without rhyme)

in the Latin heroick metre.---As to rhyme *Strangere*, I suspect (upon considering the whole passage in Robert of Brunne) that it was rather a general name, including all sorts of *uncommon* rhymes, than appropriated to any particular species.---Upon the whole, if this account of these new modes of Versification shall be allowed to be any thing like the truth, I hope I shall be thought justified in having added, "that the art could not be at all advanced by them."

(57) 'This is plain from fol. 68, edit. 1550, where the year 1350 is named as a year of great scarcity. Indeed from the mention of the kitten in the tale of the Rattons, fol. 3, 4, I should suspect that the author wrote at the very end of the reign of Edward III. when Richard was become heir-apparent.---The *Visions* of (*i. e.* concerning) *Pierce Ploughman* are generally ascribed to one Robert Langland; but the best ms. that I have seen make the Christian name of the author William, without mentioning his surname: so in ms. Cotton, *Foss. B.* xvi. at the end of page 1, is this rubrick; "Hic incipit secundus passus de visione *Willielmi de Petro Plouhman*." And in ver. 5 of p. 2, instead of "And sayde, sonne, *sleepst thou?*" the ms. has "And sayde, Wille, *sleepst thou?*" See also the account of ms. *Harl.* 2376, in the Harleian catalogue.---I call

but very generally, so that in this respect he had little to do but to imitate his predecessors. The metrical part of our poetry was capable of more improvement, by the polishing of the measures already in use, as well as by the introducing of new modes of Versification, and how far Chaucer actually contributed to the improvement of it in both or either of these particulars we are now to consider.

§ 7. With respect to the regular metres then in use they may be reduced, I think, to four. First, the

not help observing that these *Visions* have been printed from so faulty and imperfect a ms. that the author, whoever he was, would find it difficult to recognize his own work. However, the judgment of the learned Doctors Hickeys and Percy, [*Gram. d. S.* p. 217. — *Rel. of Anc. Poet.* v. iii. p. 260,] with respect to the laws of his Versification is confirmed by the ms. Each of his verses is in fact a distich composed of two verses after the Saxon form, without rhyme, and not reducible to any certain metre. I do not mean to say that a few of his verses may not be picked out consisting of fourteen and fifteen syllables, and resembling the metre used in the *Ormulum*, and there are still more of twelve and thirteen syllables, which might pass for very tolerable alexandrines; but then, on the other hand, there is a great number of his verses (warranted for genuine by the best ms.) which cannot by any mode of pronunciation be extended beyond nine or ten syllables; so that it is impossible to imagine that his verse was intended to consist of any determinate number of syllables. It is as clear that his accents, upon which the harmony of modern rhythms depends, are not disposed according to any regular system. The first division of a verse is often trochaick, and the last iambick, and *vice versa*. The only rule which he seems really to have prescribed to himself is what has been taken notice of by his first editor, *viz.* "to have three words at the least in every verse which beginne with some one letter." *Crowley's Pref. to edit. 1550.*

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long iambick metre (58), consisting of not more than fifteen nor less than fourteen syllables, and broken

(58) The most perfect example of this metre has been given above, (n. 52,) from the *Ornulum*. Each verse is composed of fifteen syllables, and broken by a cæsura on the eighth, which always terminates a word. The accents are so disposed upon the even syllables, particularly the eighth and fourteenth, as to produce the true iambick cadence.---The learned reader will recollect that the Political Verses (as they are called) of Tzetzes and others, who wrote when the Greek versification was become rythmical instead of metrical, are chiefly of this form. [See *De Cange*, v. *Politici versas*.] And it is remarkable that about the time of our Orm Ciullo d'Alcamo, a poet of Sicily, where the Greek was still a living language, [*Montf. Palæog. Gr.* l. vi,] made use of these verses of fifteen syllables, intermixed with hendecasyllables, in the only production of his which has been preserved. [*Raccolta dell' Allacci*, p. 408—16.] The first stanza is quoted by Crescimbeni, [*Ist. d. V. P.* l. i. p. 3,] who however labours very much to persuade us that the verses in question ought not to be considered as verses of fifteen syllables, but as containing each of them two verses, the one of eight and the other of seven syllables. If this were allowed the nature of the verse would not be altered; [See before, n. 54.] but the supposition is highly improbable, as by that distribution there would be three verses in each stanza not rhyming. In what follows Crescimbeni shews very plainly that he had not adverted to the real nature of Ciullo's measure, for he compares it with the noted tetrameter, *Gallus Cæsar subegit, Nicomedes Cæsarem*, which is a trochaick, whereas these verses of Ciullo are evidently iambicks, like those of Orm.—I suspect that if we could recover the genuine text of Robert of Gloucester he would be found to have written in this metre: it was used by Warner in his *Albion's England* (another chronicle in verse) in the latter end of Queen Elizabeth's reign; and Gascoigne about the same time [*Instruction concerning the making of Verse in Eng.* signature U ii,] speaks of the couplet, consisting of one verse of twelve and another of four-

by a cæsura at the eighth syllable. Secondly, the alexandrine metre (59), consisting of not more than sixteen syllables, as the commonest sort of verse then in use. It may be proper to observe that the metre which Galcoigne calls a verse of fourteen syllables is exactly the same with what is called above a verse of sixteen syllables, just as the French alexandrine may be composed indifferently of twelve or thirteen syllables, and the Italian hendecasyllable of ten, eleven, or even twelve. The general rule in all these kinds of verse is, that when they consist of the greater number of syllables the superfluous syllables, as they may be called, are never accented.

(59) Robert of Brunne, in his translation of Peter of Langtoft, seems to have used the alexandrine verse in imitation of his original; but his metre (at least in Hearn's copy) is frequently defective, especially in the latter part of his work, where he affects to rhyme at the cæsura as well as at the end of his verse. — The alexandrine metre is generally agreed to have been first used in the *Roman d'Alexandre*, by Lambert li Cors and Alexandre de Bernay, toward the latter end of the 12th century. [Du Verdier, *Bibl.* p. 780, *Fauchet*, l. ii.] A late French antiquary (M. L'Eveque de la Ravalere) in his history *Des Revolutions de la Langue Francoise*, p. 165, has combated this opinion upon the authority of some alexandrine verses which he has discovered, as he supposes, in the *Roman de Rou*, I shall only observe that no such verses are to be found in a very good ms. of the *Roman de Rou*, [*Bib. Reg.* 4 C. xi.] and I very much suspect that upon an accurate examination they will appear to have been not the work of Wace, but of some later author. A similar mistake of an interpolation or continuation for the original work has led another very able antiquary of the same nation to place the *Roman de Rou* in the 14th century. [*Mém. del'Acad. des L. & B. L.* tom. xv. p. 382.] There can be no doubt that Wace wrote the *Roman de Rou* about the middle of the 12th century. See before, n. 47. — They who attend only to the length of the alexandrine verse will naturally derive it from the trimeter iambick rhythms which were in frequent use in the beginning of the 12th century; [See *Orderic. Vital.* l. ii. p. 404, 409, 410, 415, & al.] but

thirteen syllables nor less than twelve, with a cæsure at the sixth. Thirdly, the octosyllable metre, which was in reality the ancient dimeter iambick. Fourthly, the stanza of six verses, of which the first, second, fourth, and fifth, were in the complete octosyllable metre, and the third and last catalectic, *i. e.* wanting a syllable, or even two.

§ 8. In the first of these metres it does not appear that Chaucer ever composed at all, (for I presume no one can imagine that he was the author of Gamelyn) or in the second; and in the fourth we have nothing of his but the Rhyme of Sire Thopas, which being intended to ridicule the vulgar romancers, seems to have been purposely written in their favourite metre. In the third, or octosyllable metre (60), he has left several compositions, particularly an

when it is considered that the cæsure at the sixth syllable, so essential to the alexandrine metre, was hardly ever observed in the trimeter iambick, it will seem more probable, I think, that the inventor of the alexandrine took for his model what has been called above the long iambick, but for some reason or other retrenched a foot or two syllables in the first hemistick.

(60) Though I call this the octosyllable metre, from what I apprehend to have been its original form, it often consists of nine and sometimes of ten syllables, but the eighth is always the last accented syllable.—The oldest French poems, to the latter end of the 12th century, are all in this metre; but upon the invention of the alexandrine the octosyllable verse seems by degrees to have been confined to the several species of lighter compositions, in which it is still used. Here in England Robert of Brunne, in his Preface to his translation of *Le Brut*, [*App. to Pref. to Peter Langtoft*, p. 100,] calls it *light rime*, in contradistinction to *strange rime*, of which he has just enumerated several sorts, [see n. 56,] and says that he wrote it *for use of the lewed man*: and Chaucer himself speaks of it in nearly the same terms in the beginning of the third book of 'The House of Fame;

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imperfect translation of the *Roman de la Rose*, which was probably one of his earliest performances, The

God of science and of light,
 Apollo, thugh thy grete might
 This little last book now thou gye;
 Not that I will for maystrye
 Here art potential be shewde,
 But for the ryme is light and seude,
 Yet make it somewhat agreeable
 Though some verse sayle in a syllable.

The learned editor of a part of *The Canterbury Tales* [London 1737, 8vo.] has quoted this passage [*Pref.* p. 25.] as proving, by Chaucer's own confession, that he did not write in equal measure. — It certainly proves that he did not write in equal measure *in this particular poem* of *The House of Fame*; but it proves also that he knew well what the laws of measure were, and that he thought that any deviation from them required an apology. Is it just to conclude, because Chaucer has owned a neglect of these laws in one work, written in light metre, and in which he formally disclaims any exertion of art, [*ver.* 4, 5.] that therefore he has been equally negligent of them in his other works, written in the gravest metre, and in which he may reasonably be supposed to have employed his utmost skill of Versification? In the *Troilus*, for instance, [*b.v.*] he has a solemn prayer that none *miserite* or *mismetre* his book: can we suppose that it was not originally written in metre? — But I shall not enter any farther into the general argument concerning Chaucer's Versification, which will more properly be discussed in the text: my business here was only to prevent the reader from coming to the question with a preconceived opinion (upon the authority of the learned editor above-mentioned) that "Chaucer himself," in this passage of *The House of Fame*, "has put the matter out of dispute." — To return again to the octosyllable metre. Its constitution is such, that the first syllable may often be dropped without much prejudice to the harmony of the verse, and as far as I have observed that is the syllable in which Chaucer's verses of this kind generally fail. We have an instance in the first line of the passage quoted above —

Houſe of Fame, The Dethe of the Ducheffe Blanche, and a poem called his Dreame; upon all which it will be ſufficient here to obſerve in general, that if he had given no other proofs of his poetical faculty theſe alone muſt have ſecured to him the preeminence above all his predeceſſors and contemporaries in point of Verſification.

§ 9. But by far the moſt conſiderable part of Chaucer's Works is written in that kind of metre which we now call the Heroick (61), either in diſtichs or ſtan-
 zes;

God of ſcience and of light——

ſounds as well (to my ear at leaſt) as——

Thou God of ſcience and of light——

according to Mr. Urry's correſtion. The reaſon, I apprehend, is, that the meaſure though of another ſort is ſtill regular; inſtead of a dimeter iambick it is a dimeter trochaick catelectick.—But no ſuch liberty can be taken in the heroick metre without totally deſtroying its harmony, and therefore when the above-mentioned learned editor ſays [*Pref.* p. 26.] that the numbers of Chaucer “are always muſical, whether they “want or exceed their complement,” I doubt his partiality for his author has carried him too far. I have no conception myſelf that an heroick verſe, which wants a ſyllable of its complement, can be muſical or even tolerable. The line which he has quoted from *The Knight's Tale*, [*Ter.* 1228, of this edit.]

Not in purgatory but in helle——

however you manage it, (whether you make a pauſe, or give two times to the firſt ſyllable, as he rather adviſes)—can never paſs for a verſe of any form, nor did Chaucer intend that it ſhould; he wrote (according to the beſt mſs.)——

Not only in purgatory but in helle——

(61) The heroick metre with us, as with the Italians, is of the iambick form, and conſiſts of ten, eleven, or twelve, ſyllables, the tenth however being in all caſes the laſt accented ſyllable. The French have the ſame metre, but with them it can

and as I have not been able to discover any instance of this metre being used by any English poets before

scarce contain more than eleven syllables, as their language has few (if any) words in which the accent is laid upon the antepenultima. Though we have a great number of such words we seldom use the verse of twelve syllables. The extraordinary difficulty of rhyming with three syllables is a sufficient reason for excluding it from all works which are written in rhyme, and in blank metre the two unaccented syllables at the end make the close of the verse heavy and languid. Milton, for the sake of variety of measure, has inserted a very few of these verses which the Italians call *sdruccioli* in his heroick poems, but they are more commonly, and I think more properly, employed in dramatick compositions, where a continued stateliness of numbers is less requisite.-----The generical name for this metre in Italy is *endecasillabo*, and the verses of ten and twelve syllables are distinguished by additions, the former being called *endecasillabo tronco*, and the latter *endecasillabo sdrucciolo*. This proves, I think, that the verse of eleven syllables was the primitive metre, and principally used, as it still is, in Italy; and it will appear hereafter, if I am not mistaken, that the greatest part of Chaucer's heroick verses, when properly written and pronounced, are in this measure.——A learned person, whose favours I have already acknowledged in the Glossary, v. *Gore*, cannot acquiesce in this notion, "that the greatest part of Chaucer's heroick verses, when properly written and pronounced, are verses of eleven syllables," and for a proof of the contrary he refers me particularly to The Nonne's Preele's Tale, *ver.* 14970, and the verses following and preceding. I am sorry that by an unguarded expression I should have exposed myself to a controversy which can only be decided by a careful examination of the final syllables of between thirty and forty thousand lines. It would answer my purpose as well to say *a great part*, instead of *the greatest part*; but in support of my first idea I must be permitted to observe that I have carefully examined a hundred lines which precede and as many which follow *ver.* 14970, and I find that a clear

him, I am much inclined to suppose that he was the first introducer of it into our language. It had long been practised in France, in the northern as well as the southern provinces; and in Italy, within the last fifty years before Chaucer wrote, it had been cultivated with the greatest assiduity and success, in preference to every other metre, by Dante, Petrarch, and Boccace. When we reflect that two of Chaucer's juvenile productions, the Palamon and Arcite and the Troilus, were in a manner translated from the *Theseida* and the *Filostrato* of Boccace (62), both written in the common

majority of them, as they are printed, end in *e* feminine, and consequently, according to my hypothesis, have an eleventh syllable. I observe too that several more *ought to have been printed* ascending with an *e* feminine, but whether the omission of it should be imputed to the defectiveness of the mss. or to the negligence of the collator I cannot be certain. See the concluding note of the *Essay*, &c. p. 170.

(62) It is so little a while since the world has been informed that the Palamon and Arcite of Chaucer was taken from the *Theseida* of Boccace, that it would not have been surprising if another century had elapsed without our knowing that our countryman had also borrowed his Troilus from the *Filostrato* of the same author, as the *Filostrato* is more scarce, and much less famous, even in Italy than the *Theseida*. The first suspicion which I entertained of this theft was from reading the title of the *Filostrato* at large in *Saxii Hist. Lit. Typog. Mediolan. ad an. 1498*; and I afterwards found in *Montfaucon's Bibl. mss. t. ii. p. 793*, among the King of France's mss. one with this title, *Filostrato, dell'amorose fatiche di Troilo per Gio. Boccaccio*. [See also *Quad. t. vi. p. 473*.] I had just employed a person to procure me some account of this ms. from Paris when I had the good fortune to meet with a printed copy in the very curious collection of the Rev. Mr. Crofts. The title is *Il Fylostrato, che tratta dello innamoramento de Troilo e Gryseida; et de molte altre infinite battaglie. impresso nella inclita cita de Milano per*

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pose the

Italian hendecasyllable verse, it cannot but appear extremely probable that his metre also was copied

magistro Uldericho Scinzenzeler nell'anno m, cccc, lxxxxviii, a di xxvii di mese de Septembre, in 4o. By the favour of the learned owner (who is as free in the communication as he has been zealous in the collection of his literary treasures) I had soon an opportunity of satisfying myself that Chaucer was to the full as much obliged to Boccace in his *Troilus* as in his *Knight's Tale*.—The doubts which Quadrio mentions [t. vi. p. 474,] whether the *Filostrato* was really a work of Boccace, are sufficiently answered (as he observes) by the concurring testimony of several ancient mss. which expressly name him as the author: and it may be remarked that Boccace himself, in his *Decameron*, has made the same honourable mention of this poem as of the *Theseida*, though without acknowledging either for his own. In the introduction to the sixth day he says that “*Dioneo insieme con Lauretta di Troilo et di Cresfeida cominciare a cantare,*” just as afterwards, in the conclusion of the seventh day, we are told that the same “*Dioneo et la Fiammetta gran pezza cantarono insieme d'Arcita et di Palemone.*”——It may be not improper here to observe further that a third poem, which is mentioned in the *Decameron* in the same manner with the *Theseida* and the *Filostrato*, was also probably one of Boccace's own compositions. In the conclusion of the third day it is said, that “*Dioneo et la Fiammetta cominciarono a contare di Messer Guiglielmo et della dama del vergiu.*” There is an old French romance upon this subject, as I apprehend, in ms. *Bodl.* 2386; it is entitled *Le Roman de la Chastelaine du Vergy*, and begins thus;

Une maniere de gens sont
Qui d'estre loyaux semblant font——
Ainsi qu'il avint en Bourgoigne
D'un chevalier preux et hardi
Et de la dame du Vergy.——

The story is the same in the main with that of the 70th novel in the *Heptameron* of the Queen of Navarre, from which I suppose the more modern *Histoire de la Comtesse du Vergy*, Par.

from the same original; and yet I cannot find that the form of his stanza in the *Troilus* (consisting of seven verses) was ever used by Boccace, though it is to be met with among the poems of the King of Navarre and of the Provençal rhymers (63). Whichever

1722, is taken.—I cannot find that any Italian poem upon this subject is now extant; but the unaccountable neglect with which the poetry of Boccace has been long treated by those very countrymen of his who idolize his prose makes the supposition, I think, not improbable that a small piece of this sort may have been suffered to perish, or even to lurk at this day, unpublished and unnoticed in some Italian library.

(63) See *Poésies du Roi de Navarre*, *Chans.* xvi, xviii, xxvii, xxxiii, lviii. The only difference is that the two last verses, which in Chaucer's stanza form a distinct couplet, are made by Thibaut to rhyme with the first and third. In a ms. of Provençal poetry (in the collection of the Rev. Mr. Crofts) I find one piece by Folket de Marseilles (who died about 1213) in which the stanza is formed exactly agreeable to Chaucer's.—This stanza of seven verses being first introduced, I apprehend, by Chaucer, was long the favourite measure of the poets who succeeded him: in the time of Gascoigne it had acquired the name of *Rithme royall*; “and surely,” says he, “it is a royall kinde of verse, serving best for grave discourses.” [*Instrudion concerning the making of Verse*, signature U 1 b.] Rowley, who wrote in the reigns of Henry VI. and Edward IV. with an uncommon harmony of numbers, has made the last verse of this stanza an alexandrine, and so has Milton in some of his juvenile compositions.—As the *Thesida* and the *Filictrato* of Boccace are both written in the octave stanza, of which he is often though improperly called the inventor, [see *Pasquier, Recherches*, l. vii. c. 3.] it seems extraordinary that Chaucer should never have adopted that stanza; even when he uses a stanza of eight verses (as in *The Monk's Tale*) it is constituted very differently from the Italian octave. I observe, by the way, that Chaucer's stanza of eight verses, with the addition of an alexandrine, is the stanza in which Spenser has composed his *Eaery Queen*.

he shall be supposed to have followed, whether the French or Italians, it is certain that he could not want in either language a number of models of correct and harmonious Versification, and the only question will be, whether he had ability and industry enough to imitate that part of their excellency?

§ 10. In discussing this question we should always have in mind that the correctness and harmony of an English verse depends entirely upon its being composed of a certain number of syllables, and its having the accents of those syllables properly placed. In order therefore to form any judgment of the Versification of Chaucer, it is necessary that we should know the syllabical value (if I may use the expression) of his words, and the accentual value of his syllables, as they were commonly pronounced (64) in his time; for without that knowledge it is not more probable that we should determine justly upon the exactness of his metres, than that we should be able to cast up rightly an account stated in coins of a former age of whose current rates and denominations we are totally ignorant.

§ 11. Let us consider a moment how a sensible critick in the Augustan age would have proceeded if

(64) Mons. L'Eveque de la Ravalere, in his discourse *de l'ancienneté des Chansons Francoises*, prefixed to the *Poësies du Roi de Navarre*, has the same observation with respect to the old French poets, "Leur Poësie," says he, p. 327, "marque combien ils respectoient cette règle [of exact rhyming,] mais pour en juger aujourd'hui, ainsi que de la mesure de leurs Vers, il faut prononcer les mots comme eux."——He is vindicating the ancient French bards from an unjust and ignorant censure of Boileau in his *Art. Poët. Chant. i.*; so that it should seem a great poet is not of course a judicious antiquary. See above, n. 4, a censure of Chaucer's verse by our Dryden, who was certainly a great poet.

called upon to examine a work of Ennius (65). When he found that a great proportion of the verses were strictly conformable to the ordinary rules of metre, he would probably not scruple to conclude that such a conformity must have been produced by art and design, and not by mere chance. On the other hand, when he found that in some verses the number of feet, to appearance, was either deficient or redundant, that in others the feet were seemingly composed of too few or too many syllables, of short syllables in the place of long, or of long in the place of short, he would not, I think, immediately condemn the old bard as having all at once forgotten the fundamental principles of his art, or as having wilfully or negligently deviated from them; he would first, I presume, inquire whether all these irregularities were in the genuine text of his author, or only the mistakes of copyists; he would inquire further, by comparing the genuine text with other contemporary writings and monuments, whether many things which appeared irregular were not in truth sufficiently regular, either justified by the constant practice or ex-

(65) Though Ennius died not an hundred and fifty years before what may be called the age of Augustus, his language and versification are so different from those of Ovid (for instance) that I much question whether his poems were better relished, or even understood, by the vulgar Romans in that age than the Works of Chaucer are now by the generality of readers. However a great many of his verses are as smoothly turned as those of Ovid himself, and it is well known that Virgil has not scrupled to incorporate several of them into his divine *Æneid*. At the same time whoever casts an eye over the Fragments of his *Annals*, as collected by Columna, Hesselius, and others, will find frequent examples of all the seeming irregularities alluded to in the text.

caused by the allowed license of the age: where authority failed he would have recourse (but soberly) to etymology and analogy; and if after all a few passages remained not reducible to the strict laws of metre by any of the methods above-mentioned, if he were really (as I have supposed him) a sensible critick he would be apt rather to expect patiently the solution of his difficulties from more correct manuscripts, or a more complete theory of his author's versification, than to cut the knot by deciding peremptorily that the work was composed without any regard to metrical rules.

§ 12. I beg leave to pursue the same course with respect to Chaucer. The great number of verses sounding complete even to our ears, which is to be found in all the least corrected copies of his Works, authorizes us to conclude that he was not ignorant of the laws of metre. Upon this conclusion it is impossible not to ground a strong presumption that he intended to observe the same laws in the many other verses which seem to us irregular; and if this was really his intention, what reason can be assigned sufficient to account for his having failed so grossly and repeatedly, as is generally supposed, in an operation which every balladmonger in our days, man, woman, or child, is known to perform with the most unerring exactness, and without any extraordinary fatigue?

§ 13. The offences against metre in an English verse, as has partly been observed before, must arise either from a superfluity or deficiency of syllables, or from the accents being improperly placed.

§ 14. With respect to the first species of irregularity, I have not taken notice of any superfluities in Chaucer's verses: but what may be reduced to just

measure by the usual practices (66) of even modern poets; and this, by the way, is a strong proof of his real attention to metrical rules; for otherwise, if he had written without any restraint of that kind, a certain proportion of his deviations from measure must in all probability have been on the side of excess.

§ 15. But a great number of Chaucer's verses labour under an apparent deficiency of a syllable or two. In some of these perhaps the defect may still be supplied from mss. but for the greatest part I am persuaded no such assistance is to be expected (67);

(66) It is unnecessary to trouble the reader with an enumeration of syncope, apostrophus, synecphonesis, &c.

Quicquid habent telorum armamentaria vatum.

They may all, I think, be comprehended in our language under this one general principle, that an English verse, though chiefly composed of feet of two syllables, is capable of receiving feet of three syllables in every part of it, provided only one of the three syllables be accented.--- In short, whoever can taste the metrical harmony of the following lines of Milton will not be embarrassed how to dispose of the (seemingly) superfluous syllables which he may meet with in Chaucer;

P. L. ii. 123. Ominous | conjecture on the whole success.

302. A pil | lar of state | ; deep on his front engraven---

658. Celestial spir | its in bôn | dage, nor the abyss--

v. 495. No inconvenient di | et, nor too | light fare.

vii. 122. Things not revealed, which the invis | ible King---

(67) I would not be thought to undervalue the mss. which I have not seen, or to discourage those who may have inclination and opportunity to consult them; I only mean to say that where the text is supported (as it generally is in this edit.) by the concurrence of two or three good mss. and the sense is clear and complete, we may safely consider it as tolerably cor-

and therefore supposing the text in these cases to be correct, it is worth considering whether the verse also may not be made correct by adopting, in certain words, a pronunciation different indeed from modern practice, but which we have reason to believe was used by the Author himself.

For instance, in the genitive case singular and the plural number of nouns (which as has been remarked above in the time of Chaucer had the same expression) there can be no doubt that such words as *sboures*, ver. 1, *croppes*, ver. 7, *sbires*, ver. 15, *lordes*, ver. 47, &c. were regularly pronounced as consisting of two syllables: whenever they are used as monosyllables it must be considered as a poetical license, warranted however even then (as we may presume from the natural progress of our language) by the practice of innaccurate speakers in common conversation.

In like manner we may be sure that *ed*, the regular termination of the past tense and its participle, made or contributed to make a second syllable in the words *perced*, ver. 2, *bathed*, ver. 3, *loved*, ver. 45, *wered*, ver. 75, &c. (68.) The first step toward re-

rect. In the course of the Notes I shall have occasion to point out several passages in which either the disagreement of the good mss. or the obscurity of their readings makes a further inquiry absolutely necessary in order to settle the text.

(68) It appears from the Preface to the last edition of Chaucer's Works, Lond. 1721, that Mr. Urry, the undertaker of that edition, had the same opinion with respect to the pronunciation of the final syllables in this and the last mentioned instance, and that it was his intention to distinguish those syllables, *whenever they were to be pronounced*, by printing them with an *i* instead of an *e*, as *sbouris*, *sbiris*, *percid*, *lovrid*, &c. As such a distinction is entirely unsupported by the mss. and must necessarily very much disfigure the orthography of the lan-

ducing words of this form to monosyllables seems to have been to shorten the last syllable, either by transposing the final letters, as in—*wolde*, ver. 144, *sayde*, ver. 763, &c. or by throwing away the *d*, as in—*caste*, ver. 1910, *caste*, ver. 2083, &c. In both these cases the words still remained of two syllables, the final *e* being sounded as an *e* feminine; but they were prepared to lose their last syllable by the easy license of changing an *e* feminine into an *e* mute, or of dropping it entirely, according to the modern practice.

§ 16. But nothing will be found of such extensive use for supplying the deficiencies of Chaucer's metre as the pronunciation of the *e* feminine; and as that pronunciation has been for a long time totally antiquated, it may be proper here to suggest some reasons for believing (independently of any arguments to be drawn from the practice of Chaucer himself) that the final

guage, I cannot think that an editor has a right to introduce it upon ever so plausible a pretence. A shorter, and in my opinion a less exceptionable, method would have been to have distinguished the syllables of this sort, *whenever they were to be contracted*, by adding a sign of syncope, thus, *shoure's*, *shire's*, *perce'd*, *love'd*. But after all, a reader who cannot perform such operations for himself had better not trouble his head about the Verification of Chaucer. —Mr. Urry had also discovered that the final *e* (of which I shall treat more at large in the next section) often made a syllable in Chaucer's verse, and (according to the Preface quoted above) he “always marked with an accent, when he judged it necessary to pronounce it, as *faet*, *balve*, *smale*, ver. 5, 8, 9.” I have the same objection to this mark that I have to innovations in orthography, and besides that, it would be apt to mislead the ignorant reader (for whom only it can be intended) by making him suppose that the *e* so marked was really to be accented, whereas the true *e* feminine is always to be pronounced with an obscure evanescent sound, and is incapable of bearing any stress or accent.

e in our ancient language was very generally pronounced as the *e* feminine is at this day by the French.

With respect to words imported directly from France, it is certainly quite natural to suppose that for some time they retained their native pronunciation, whether they were nouns substantive, as *boſte*, ver. 753, *face*, ver. 1580, &c.—or adjectives, as *large*, ver. 755, *ſtrange*, ver. 13, &c.—or verbs, as *grante*, ver. 12756, *preche*, ver. 12327, &c.; and it cannot be doubted that in theſe and other ſimilar words in the French language the final *e* was always pronounced, as it ſtill is, ſo as to make them diſſyllables.

We have not indeed ſo clear a proof of the original pronunciation of the Saxon part (69) of our language; but we know, from general obſervation, that

(69) This is owing to the Saxons not having left us any metrical compositions, as has been obſerved before, p. 126. Hickes complains [*Gr. A. S. c. xxiii. § 7.*] “that it is difficult to know “of how many ſyllables a Saxon verſe ſometimes conſiſts, for “this reaſon among others, *quod non conſtat quomodo voces in* “*e feminino vel obſcuro terminatæ pronuntiandæ ſunt in car-* “*mine.*” He might (perhaps with more propriety) have complained that it is difficult to know how words ending in *e* feminine are to be pronounced in a Saxon verſe, becauſe it is uncertain of how many ſyllables any of their verſes conſiſted. I have mentioned in the text two caſes of words abbreviated, in which I think we might conclude from general reaſoning that the final *e* was pronounced. As this theory, with reſpect to theſe words, is entirely confirmed by the practice of Orm, (the moſt authentick metrical compoſer that we have in our ancient language) it would not perhaps be unreaſonable to infer that the practice of Orm, in other words of Saxon original in which the final *e* is pronounced, is conſonant to the old Saxon uſage. However that may be, the practice of Orm muſt certainly be admitted to prove that ſuch a pronunciation prevailed at leaſt 150 years before Chaucer.

all changes of pronunciation are usually made by small degrees; and therefore when we find that a great number of those words which in Chaucer's time ended in *e* originally ended in *a*, we may reasonably presume that our ancestors first passed from the broader sound of *a* to the thinner sound of *e* feminine, and not at once from *a* to *e* mute. Besides, if the final *e* in such words was not pronounced why was it added? From the time that it has confessedly ceased to be pronounced it has been gradually omitted in them, except where it may be supposed of use to lengthen or soften (70) the preceding syllable, as in—*hope, name, &c.* But according to the ancient orthography it terminates many words of Saxon original where it cannot have been added for any such purpose, as *berte, childe, olde, wilde, &c.* In these therefore we must suppose that it was pronounced as an *e* feminine, and made part of a second syllable, and so, by a parity of reason, in all others in which, as in these, it appears to have been substituted for the Saxon *a*.

Upon the same grounds we may presume that in words terminated according to the Saxon form in *en*, such as the infinitive modes and plural numbers of verbs, and a great variety of adverbs and prepositions, the *u* only was at first thrown away, and the

(70) In most of the words in which the final *e* has been omitted its use in lengthening or softening the preceding syllable has been supplied by an alteration in the orthography of that syllable; thus in—*grete, mett, flete, rede, dere*—in which the final *e* was originally long as closing a syllable, it has (since they have been pronounced as monosyllables) been changed either into *ea*, as in—*great, meat, seal, read, dear*; or into *ee*, as in—*greet, meet, steel, reed, deer*. In like manner the *o* in—*bote, fote, dore, gode, mone*, has been changed either into *oa*, as in—*boat, fowl*; or into *oo*, as in—*door, good, moon*.

e, which then became final, continued for a long time to be pronounced as well as written.

These considerations seem sufficient to make us believe that the pronunciation of the *e* feminine is founded on the very nature of both the French and Saxon parts of our language; and therefore though we may not be able to trace the reasons of that pronunciation in all cases so plainly as in those which have been just mentioned, we may safely, I think, conclude with the learned Wallis (71), that what is generally considered as an *e* mute in our language,

(71) *Gram. Ling. Ang. c. i. § 2.* "Originem vero hujus *e* muti, nequis miretur unde devenerit, hanc esse judico; nempe, quod antiquitus pronunciatum fuerit, sed obscuro sono, sicut Gallorum *e* sceminum." He afterwards adds, Certissimum autem hujus rei indicium est ex antiquis poetis petendam; "apud quos reperitur illud *e* promiscue vel constituere vel non constituere novam syllabam, prout ratio carminis postulaverit." So that, according to this judicious writer, (who has confessedly searched much deeper into the formation of vocal sounds in general, and the pronunciation of the English language in particular, than any of our other grammarians) I might have assumed as certain the point which I have been labouring in the text (by arguments drawn from reason and analogy) to render probable.—There is much more to this purpose in Wallis, *loc. cit.* which I should transcribe, if I did not suppose that his book is in the hands of every one who is likely to be curious upon this subject. I will only take notice of one passage which may be wrested to his disadvantage. From considering the gradual extinction of the *e* feminine in our language, and observing that the French, with whom he conversed, very often suppressed it in their common speech, he has been led to predict that the pronunciation of it would *perhaps shortly* be disused among them as among ourselves. The prediction has certainly failed, but notwithstanding I will venture to say that at the time when it was made it was not unworthy of Wallis's sagacity. Unluckily for its success a number of eminent writers happened at that very time to be growing up in France,

either at the end or in the middle of words (72), was anciently pronounced, but obscurely, like the *e* feminine of the French.

§ 17. The third kind of irregularity to which an English verse is liable is from the accents being misplaced. The restoring of Chaucer's words to their just number of syllables, by the methods which have whose works having since been received as standards of style must probably fix for many centuries the ancient usage of the *e* feminine in poetry, and of course give a considerable check to the natural progress of the language. If the age of Edward III. had been as favourable to letters as that of Louis XIV. ; if Chaucer and his contemporary poets had acquired the same authority here that Corneille, Moliere, Racine, and Boileau, have obtained in France; if their works had been published by themselves and perpetuated in a genuine state by printing, I think it probable that the *e* feminine would still have preserved its place in our poetical language at least, and certainly without any prejudice to the smoothness of our versification.

(72) The reasoning in the text concerning the final *e* is equally applicable to the same vowel in the middle of words. Indeed (as Wallis has observed, *loc. cit.*) " vix uspiam in medio dictionis reperitur *e* mutum, quod non ab origine fuerit finale." If therefore it was pronounced while final, it would probably continue to be pronounced notwithstanding the addition of a syllable : If it was pronounced in *swetely, trewe, large, riche*, it would be pronounced in *swetely, trewely, largely, richely*. [See v. 123 and 3219, v. 775 and 3692, v. 2740 and 3034, v. 1014 and 1913.] In another very numerous set of words (French verbals ending in *ment*) the pronunciation of this middle *e* is countenanced not only by analogy, but also by the still subsisting practice in the French language : so Chaucer certainly pronounced the words *jugement*, ver. 780, 807, 820, *commandement*, ver. 2871, 2981, *amendement*, ver. 4183, *pavement*, *arvisement*, ver. 4505, 4506. Even Spenser in the same canto (the 8th of B. v.) uses *atonement* and *avengement* as words of four syllables, [It. 21. 8—30. 5,] and Wallis takes notice that the middle *e* in *commandement* was pronounced in his time.

been pointed out above, will often be of signal service in restoring his accents also to their proper places; but further, in many words we must be cautious of concluding too hastily that Chaucer accented the same syllables that we do; on the contrary, I am persuaded that in his French words he most commonly laid his accent according to the French custom, (upon the *last* syllable, or the *last but one*, in words ending in *e* feminine) which, as is well known, is the very reverse of our practice. Thus in ver. 3, he uses *licour fontiquour*; ver. 11, *corages* for *courages*; ver. 22, again *corage* for *courage*; ver. 37, *resca* for *raison*; ver. 77, *viage* for *voyage*; ver. 109, 10, *visage, usage*, for *visage usage*; ver. 140, *manere* for *manner*; ver. 186, *laboure* for *labour*; ver. 204, *prelat* for *prelate*; ver. 211, *langage* for *language*; ver. 212, *mariage* for *marriage*; ver. 216, *contree* for *country*; and so through the whole work.

In the same manner he accents the last syllable of the participle present, as ver. 885, 6, *wedding, coming*, for *wedding, coming*; ver. 903, *living* for *living*; ver. 907, 8, *coming, crying*, for *coming, crying*; ver. 998, *breuning* for *breuning*, &c.; and as he does this in words of Saxon as well as of French growth, I should suppose that the old participle of the present tense ending in *and* was originally accented upon that syllable, as it certainly continued to be by the Scottish poets a long time after Chaucer. See *Bp. Douglas, Virg.* p. 18, ver. 18, *spyrngand*; ver. 51, *berand*; p. 27, ver. 49, *seand*; p. 29, ver. 10, *seand*.

These instances are all taken from the rhyming syllables (where a strong accent is indispensably necessary) in order to prove beyond contradiction that Chaucer frequently accented his words in the French manner. But if he followed this practice at the end of his verses, it is more than probable that he did

the same in the middle, whenever it gave a more harmonious flow to his metre; and therefore in ver. 4, instead of *vértue*, I suppose he pronounced *vertúe*; in ver. 11, instead of *nátúre*, *natúre*; in ver. 25, instead of *avénture*, *aventúre*; in ver. 46, instead of *bónour*, *bonoúr*, &c.

It may be proper however to observe, that we are not to expect from Chaucer that regularity in the disposition of his accents which the practice of our greatest poets in the last and the present century has taught us to consider as essential to harmonious (73) versification: none of his masters, either French or Italian, had set him a pattern of exactness (74) in this respect; and it is rather surprising that, without rule or example to guide him, he has so seldom failed to place his accents in such a manner as to produce the cadence best suited to the nature of his verse.

(73) It is agreed, I believe, that in our heroick metre those verses (considered singly) are the most harmonious in which the accents fall upon the even syllables; but it has never (that I know) been defined how far a verse may vary from this its most perfect form and yet remain a verse. On the *tenth* (or rhyming) syllable a strong accent is in all cases indispensably required, and in order to make the line tolerably harmonious, it seems necessary that at least *two more* of the *even* syllables should be accented, the *fourth* being (almost always) one of them. Milton, however, has not subjected his verse even to these rules; particularly (either by negligence or design) he has frequently put an unaccented syllable in the *fourth* place. See *P. L.* b. iii. 36, 586, b. v. 413, 750, 874.

(74) It has been suggested above that Chaucer probably copied his heroick metre from Boccace; but neither Boccace nor any of the older Italian poets are exact in the disposition of their accents. Though their hendecasyllable metre is allowed by the best critics to be derived from the trimeter iambick catalectic, the perfection of it has never been determined (like that of our heroick metre) to consist in the conformity of its

§ 18. I shall conclude this long and (I fear) tedious Essay with a grammatical and metrical analysis of the first eighteen lines of The Canterbury Tales. This will afford me an opportunity of illustrating at once a considerable part of that theory which I have ventured to propose in the preceding pages with regard to the Language and Versification of Chaucer: the remainder I shall take occasion to explain in a few Notes upon particular passages.

THE BEGINNING OF THE CANTERBURY TALES.

- I. *Whanne* I that April with his *shoures* 2 *sote* 3
- II. The droughte of March hath *perced* I to the *rote*,
- III. And *bathe* I every *veine* in *swiche* 2 *licoür* 3,
- IV. Of whiche *vertue* I engendred is the flour;

accents to the pure iambick measure. [*Quadrio*, L. ii. *Dist.* iii. c. iv. *part* i.] Nor does the King of Navarre always dispose his accents more agreeably to our present notions. It is probable, I think, that some fundamental differences in the three languages may have led each of the three nations to prefer a different form of constructing the same kind of verse.

I. 1. *Whanne*, *Sax.* *Hwæne*, is so seldom used as a disyllable by Chaucer, that for some time I had great doubts about the true reading of this line: I now believe that it is right as here printed, and that the same word is to be pronounced as a disyllable in ver. 703.

But with these relikes *whanne* that he fond—
Thanne, a word of the same form, occurs more frequently as a disyllable. See ver. 12260, 12506, 12721, 13924, 15282.

—2. *Shoures*, *dis.* plural number. See above, p. 94.—3. *Sote*. See ver. V.

II. 1. *Perced*, *dis.* participle of the past time. See above, p. 159.—2. *Rote*, root.

III. 1. *Bathe*, *dis.* See II. 1.—2. *Swiche*, such, from *swilke*, *Sax.*—3. *licoür*, *Fr.* has the accent upon the last syllable, after the French mode.

IV. 1. *Vertue*, *Fr.* may be accented in the same manner.

- V. Whan Zéphirus eke with his *sôte* 1 *brêthe*
 VI. *Enspired* 1 hâth in évery holt and héthe
 VII. The tendre *crôppes* 1, and the yonge 2 *sônne*
 VIII. Hâth in the Ram his *hâlfe* 1 colirs yronne 2,
 IX. And *smale* 1 *foûles* 2 *mâken* 3 *mélodie*,
 X. That *slépen* 1 *alle* 2 night with open eye,
 XI. So priketh *bém* 1 *Natûre* 2 in *bir* 3 *corâges* 4,

There is another way of preserving the harmony of this verse, by making *whiche* (from *u bilke*, Sax.) a dissyllable. See ver. 1014, 3921, 5488, 6537. *Vertue* may then be pronounced, as it is now, with the accent on the first, the second syllable being incorporated with the first of *engendred*.

V. 1. *Sote*, *sewte*, *fwete*, sweet, dis. See ver. 3219, 3699, 3724, 3765, 3790.

VI. 1. *Enspired*, tris. part. of past time.

VII. 1. *Croppes*, dis. pl. n. as *floures*. I. 2.—2. *Yonge*, dis. See ver. 213, 666, 1013, 3233, 73. It is used as a dissyllable in the *Ormulum*, col. 230;

That was god bliþe *sól* i wís till ure *yunge* *gênge*.
Stronge and *longe* are pronounced in the same manner. See ver. 2375, 2640, 6, 3069, 3438, 3682.

VIII. 1. *Halfe* or *hâlfe*, dis. The original word is *halfen*. So *selve*, from *selsen*, is a dissyllable, ver. 2862, 4535.—2. *Yronne*, run, part. of the past time, with the Saxon prepositive particle *ge*, which in the mss. of Chaucer is universally expressed by *y* or *i*. In this edition, for the sake of perspecuity, *y* only is used.

IX. 1. *Smale*, dis. See ver. 146, 2078, 6897, 10207.—
 2. *Foules*, dis. as *floures*. I. 2.—3. *Maken*, make, plural number of the present tense. See above, p. 119.

X. 1. *Slepen*, as *maken*, IX. 3.—2. *Alle*, dis. See ver. 76, 349, 536, 1954, 2102.

XI. 1. *Hem*, them. It is constantly used so by Chaucer. 2. *Nature* should perhaps be accented on the last syllable (or rather the last but one, supposing it a trisyllable) after the French manner, though in the present case the verse will be sufficiently harmonious if it be accented on the first. That Chaucer did

XII. Than *lōngen* I fōlk to *gōn* 2 on pilgrimages,

XIII. And *pālmeres* I fōr to *ſeken* 2 *ſtrānge* 3 ſtrōndes,

XIV. To *ſerve* I *hālwe* 2 *cōutbe* 3 in ſōndry lōndes ;

often accent it after the French manner appears from ver. 8778, 9842, 11657, 11945, 12229. In the ſame manner he accents *figūre*, ver. 2037, 2045 ; *meſūre*, ver. 8132, 8498 ; *aſūre*, *ſtātūre*, ver. 8130, 3 ; *peintūre*, ver. 11967 ; *aventure*, ver. 1188, 1237 ; *creature*, ver. 2397, 4884 ; and many other words of the ſame form, derived from the French language.

—3. *Hir*, *their*, the poſſeſſive pronoun of the third perſon plural, is variously written, *bir*, *hire*, *ber*, and *here*, not only in different mſs. but even in the ſame page of good mſs. There ſeems to be no reaſon for perpetuating varieties of this kind, which can only have taken their riſe from the unsettled ſtate of our orthography before the invention of printing, and which now contribute more than any real alteration of the language to obſcure the ſenſe of our old authors. In this edition therefore *hir* is conſtantly put to ſignify *their*, and *hire* to ſignify *ber*, whether it be the oblique caſe of the perſonal pronoun *ſhe* or the poſſeſſive of the ſame pronoun. —4. *Cōrāges*, *Fr.* is to be accented on the penultima. See before, p. 165, and alſo ver. 1947, 2215. To the other inſtances quoted in p. 165 add *awantāge*, ver. 2449, 4566 ; *brocāge*, 3375 ; *ſōrāge*, ver. 3166 ; *lināge*, ver. 4270, 5419 ; *ſervāge*, ver. 1948, 4788 ; *coſſāge*, ver. 5831 ; *parāge*, ver. 5532.

XII. 1. *Longen*, as *maken*, IX. 3. —2. *Gon*, infinitive mode of *go*, terminated in *n*, according to the Saxon form. See above, p. 119.

XIII. 1. *Palmeres*, diſ. the *e* of the termination being cut out by ſyncope, as it generally is in plural nouns of three ſyllables, accented upon the firſt, and in the paſt tenſes and their participles of verbs, of the ſame deſcription, ending in *ed*. The reaſon ſeems to be, that where the accent is placed ſo early we cannot pronounce the final ſyllables fully without laying more ſtreſs upon them than they can properly bear. —2. *Seken*, as *ſen*, XII. 2. —3. *Strange*, diſ. *Fr.* See before, p. 161.

XIV. 1. *Serve*, diſ. from *ſerven*, the *n* being thrown away before *b*. See above, p. 119 and 162. —2. *Hālwe*, *Sax.* *palger*.

- XV. And spécialement from évery *shires* 1 énde
 XVI. Of *Englelond* 1 to Cánterbúry they wénde 2,
 XVII. The hóly blísful mártýr fór to sêke
 XVIII. That *hém* 1 hath *hólpen* 2 whán that théy were
sêke 3.

The Saxon *g* is changed into *u*, as in *fortune*, *morave*, and some others, though it generally passes into *y*. The derivatives from this same word afford us instances of both forms; *holyness*, *holy-day*, all *hallovs-day*.---3. *Coutbe*, known, the participle of the past time from *connen*, to know. See before, n. 35.

XV. 1. *Shires*, dis. genitive case sing. See before, p. 159.

XVI. 1. *Englelond*, trisyllable, from the Saxon *Englalanða*.

—2. The last foot consists of three syllables;

—to Cán | terbur | y they wénde.

See above, n. 65.

XVIII. *Hem*, them. See XI. 1. 2. *Holpen*, the participle of the past time from the irregular verb *help*. See before, n. 34. ---3. *Sêke*, sick. As Chaucer usually writes this word *sike*, we may suppose that in this instance he has altered the orthography in order to make the rhyme more exact, a liberty with which he sometimes indulges himself, though much more sparingly than his contemporary poets. The Saxon writers afford authorities to justify either method of spelling, as they use both *Seoca* and *Sioca*.—I have hitherto considered these verses as consisting of *ten* syllables only; but it is impossible not to observe that, according to the rules of pronunciation established above, all of them, except the third and fourth, consist really of *eleven* syllables. This is evident at first sight in ver. 13, 14, 15, 16, and might be shewn as clearly by authority or analogy in the others; but as the *eleventh* syllable, in our Versification, being unaccented, may always, I apprehend, be absent or present without prejudice to the metre, there does not seem to be any necessity for pointing it out in every particular instance.

AN INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE

TO THE CANTERBURY TALES.

The Contents.

THE dramatick form of novel writing invented by Boccace. The Decameron a species of comedy, § 1. The Canterbury Tales composed in imitation of The Decameron. Design of this Discourse to give, i. The general plan of them; and, ii. A review of the parts contained in this edition, § 2. The general plan of The Canterbury Tales as originally designed by Chaucer, § 3. Parts of this plan not executed, § 4. Review of the parts contained in this edition.—*The Prologue*. The time of the pilgrimage, § 5. The number of the company, § 6. Their agreement to tell Tales for their diversion upon their journey, § 7. Their characters. Their setting out. The Knight appointed by lot to tell the first Tale, § 8. *The Knight's Tale* copied from the *Theseida* of Boccace. A summary account of the *Theseida*, § 9. The Monk called upon to tell a Tale: interrupted by the Miller, § 10. *The Miller's Tale*, § 11. *The Reeve's Tale*. The principal incidents taken from an old French *Tabliau*, § 12. *The Cook's Tale* imperfect in all the mss. No foundation for ascribing *The Story of Gamelyn* to Chaucer, § 13. *The Prologue to The Man of Lawe's Tale*. The progress of the Pilgrims upon their journey. A reflection seemingly levelled at Gower, § 14. *The Man of Lawe's Tale* taken from Gower, who was not the inventor of it. A similar story in a lay of Bretagne, § 15. Reasons for placing *The Wife of Bath's Prologue* next to *The Man of Lawe's Tale*, § 16. *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*, § 17. *The Wife of Bath's Tale* taken from the story of Florent in Gower, or from some older narrative. The fable much improved by Chaucer, § 18. *The Tales of the Friars and the Summonour*, § 19. *The Clerke's Tale* said by Chaucer to be borrowed from Petrarch, whose work upon this subject is a mere translation from Boccace, § 20. Reasons for changing the order of the three last stanzas of the Ballade at the end of *The Clerke's Tale*, and for placing *The Prologue to The Marchant's Tale* immediately after them, § 21. *The Marchant's Tale*. The adventure of the Pear-tree in the Latin fable of Adolphus. The Pluto and Proserpine of Chaucer revived by Shakespeare under the names of Oberon and Titania, § 22. *A new Prologue to The Squier's Tale*, (now first printed) connecting it with *The Marchant's Tale*, § 23. *The Squier's Tale*, probably never finished by Chaucer, § 24. *The Frankelien's Prologue* attributed to the Marchant in the common editions. Reasons for restoring it to the Frankelien, § 25. *The Frankelien's Tale* taken from a lay of Bretagne. The same story twice told by Boccace, § 26. Reasons for removing the Tales of The Nonne and Chanon's Yeman to the end of The Nonne's Preestle's Tale, § 27. Doubts concerning the Prologue to The Doctour's Tale, § 28. *The Doctour's Tale*. The story of Virginia from

Livy, § 29. *The Pardoner's Prologue*. The proper use of the Prologue in this work. The outline of *The Pardoner's Tale* in the *Cent Nouvelles Antiepe*, § 30. Reasons for transferring to the Shipman a Prologue which has usually been prefixed to *The Tale of the Squier*. *The Shipman's Tale* probably borrowed from some French fableur older than Boccace, § 31. *The Prior's Prologue and Tale*, § 32. Chaucer called upon for his Tale. His *Royne of Sire Thopas* a ridicule upon the old metrical romances, § 33. His other *Tale of Melibee* in prose a translation from the French, § 34. *The Monk's Tale*, upon the plan of Boccace's work *De Casibus virorum Illustrium*, § 35. *The Tale of the Nonne's Prech*. The ground-work borrowed from a fable of Marie, a French poetess, § 36. *The Nonne's Tale* not connected with any preceding Tale: translated from the life of St. Cecilia in the Golden Legend: originally composed as a separate work, § 37. *The Tale of the Chanon's Yeman* a satire against the alchemists, § 38. *The Manciple's Prologue*. The Pilgrims advanced to a place called *Bob-up-and-down*. *The Manciple's Tale* the fable of Coronis in Ovid, § 39. The poem called *The Plowman's Tale* why omitted in this edition †, § 40. *The Person's Prologue*. The time of the day. *The Person's Tale* a treatise on penance, § 41. Remarks upon what is commonly called the *Re-translation* at the end of the *Person's Tale*. Conclusion, § 42.

† Mr. Tyrwhitt here speaks of his own edition—this contains the whole omitted Tales, *viz.* *The Plowman's Tale*, *Tale of Gamelyn*, *Adventure of Pardoner and Tapeler*, and *The Marchant's Second Tale*. See vol. VI.

§ I **T**HE dramatick form which Boccace gave to his collection of tales or novels about the middle of the 14th century (1) must be allowed to have been a ca-

(1) The action of *The Decameron* being supposed in 1348, the year of the great pestilence, it is probable that Boccace did not set about his work till after that period. How soon he completed it is uncertain. It should seem from the introduction to the fourth day that a part (containing perhaps the three first days) was published separately, for in that introduction he takes pains to answer the censures which had been passed upon him by several persons who had read his novels. One of the censures is, "that it did not become *his age* to write for the "amusement of women," &c. In his answer he seems to allow the fact that he was rather an old fellow, but endeavours to justify himself by the examples of Guido Cavalcanti &c.

pital improvement of that species of amusing composition. The Decameron in that respect (not to mention many others) has the same advantage over the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, which are supposed to have preceded it in point of time, that a regular comedy will necessarily have over an equal number of single unconnected scenes. Perhaps indeed there would be no great harm if the criticks would permit us to consider The Decameron, and other compositions of that kind, in the light of comedies not intended for the stage; at least we may venture to assume that the closer any such composition shall copy the most essential forms of comedy, the more natural and defined the plan shall be, the more the characters shall be diversified, the more the tale shall be suited to the characters, so much the more conspicuous will be the skill of the writer, and his work approach the nearer to perfection.

§ 2. The Canterbury Tales are a work of the same nature with The Decameron, and were in all probability composed in imitation of it, though upon a dif-

Dante Alighieri *gia vecchi* et Messer Cino da Pistoria *vecchissimo*. It appears from a passage in the *Laberinto d'Amore* [ed. 1723, t. iii. page 24,] that Boccace considered himself as an elderly man when he was a little turned of forty, and therefore the publication of the first part of The Decameron may very well have been, as Salviati has fixed it, [V. Manni *Ist. del Decam.* p. 144.] in 1353, when Boccace was just forty years of age. If we consider the nature of the work, and that the author in his conclusion calls it repeatedly *lunga fatica*, and says that *molto tempo* had passed between the commencement and completion of it, we can hardly, I think, suppose that it was finished in less than ten years, which will bring the publication of the entire collection of novels (as we now have it) down to 1363.

ferent and (in my opinion) an improved plan. It would be easy to shew that in the several points above-mentioned Chaucer has either been more judicious or more fortunate than his master Boccace; but (waving for the present (2) that disquisition) I shall proceed to the immediate object of this Discourse, which is, in the first place, to lay before the reader the general plan of 'The Canterbury Tales, as it appears to have been originally designed by Chaucer, and, secondly, to give a particular review of the several parts of that Work which are come down to us as they are published in this edition.

§ 3. The general plan of 'The Canterbury Tales may be learned in a great measure from the Prologue which Chaucer himself has prefixed to them. He sup-

(2) I will only just mention what appear to me to be fundamental defects in 'The Decameron. In the first place, the *action* is indefinite, not limited by its own nature, but merely by the will of the author. It might, if he had been so pleased, have as well comprehended twenty or a hundred days as ten, and therefore though some frivolous reasons are assigned for the return of the company to Florence, we see too plainly that the true reason was that the budget of novels was exhausted; not to mention that every day after the first may properly be considered as containing a new action, or, what is worse, a repetition of the action of the former day. The second defect is the *characters*, which are so nearly resembling to each other in age, rank, and even natural disposition, that if they had been strictly supported their conversation must have been incapable of that variety which is necessary to carry the reader through so long a work. The third defect has arisen from the author's attempt to remedy the second. In order to diversify and enliven his narrations he has made a circle of virtuous ladies and polite gentlemen hear and relate in their turns a number of stories which cannot with any degree of probability be supposed to have been suffered in such an assembly.

poses there that a company of pilgrims going to Canterbury assemble at an inn in Southwark, and agree that for their common amusement on the road each of them shall tell at least one Tale in going to Canterbury, and another in coming back from thence, and that he who shall tell the best Tales shall be treated by the rest with a supper upon their return to the same inn. This is shortly the fable. The characters of the pilgrims are as various as at that time could be found in the several departments of middle life; that is, in fact, as various as could with any probability be brought together so as to form one company, the highest and the lowest ranks of society being necessarily excluded. It appears further that the design of Chaucer was not barely to recite the Tales told by the pilgrims, but also to describe their journey, *And all the remenant of their pilgrimage*, v. 726, including, probably, their adventures at Canterbury as well as upon the road. If we add that the Tales, besides being nicely adapted to the characters of their respective relators, were intended to be connected together by suitable introductions, and interspersed with diverting episodes, and that the greatest part of them was to have been executed in verse, we shall have a tolerable idea of the extent and difficulty of the whole undertaking; and admiring, as we must, the vigour of that genius which in an advanced age (3) could begin so vast a work, we shall rather

(3) Chaucer was born in 1328, and it is most probable, I think, that he did not begin his Canterbury Tales before 1382 at the earliest. My reason is this. The queen, who is mentioned in *The Legende of Good Women*, v. 496, was certainly Anne of Bohemia, the first queen of Rich. II.; she was not married to Richard till the beginning of 1382, so that *The Legende* cannot possibly be supposed of an earlier date than that year. In *The Legende* [ver. 329—332, ver. 417—430,] Chaucer

lament than be surpris'd that it has been left imperfect.

§ 4. In truth, if we compare those parts of *The Canterbury Tales* of which we are in possession with the sketch which has been just given of the intended whole, it will be found that more than one half is wanting. The Prologue we have perhaps nearly complete, and the greatest part of the journey to Canterbury, but not a word of the transactions at Canterbury, or of the journey homeward, or of the Epilogue which we may suppose was to have concluded the work, with an account of the prize-supper and the separation of the company. Even in that part which we have of the journey to Canterbury it will be necessary, in the following review, to take notice of certain defects and inconsistencies which can only be accounted for upon the supposition that the work was never finished by the Author.

§ 5. Having thus stated the general plan of *The Canterbury Tales*, I shall now, according to my promise, enter upon a particular review of those parts of them which are published in this edition, beginning with *The Prologue*.

It seems to have been the intention of Chaucer, in what he has enumerated, I believe, all the considerable works which he had then composed. It was to his purpose not to omit any. He not only does not mention *The Canterbury Tales*, but he expressly names the story of Palamon and Arcite, and the Life of Saint Cecilia, both which now make part of them, as separate compositions. I am persuaded therefore that in 1382 the work of *The Canterbury Tales* was not begun; and if we look further, and consider the troubles in which Chaucer was involved for the five or six following years by his connections with John of Northampton, we can hardly suppose that it was much advanced before 1389, the sixty-first year of the Author's age.

the first lines of the Prologue, to mark with some exactness the *time* of his supposed pilgrimage, but unluckily the two circumstances of his description which were most likely to answer that purpose are each of them irreconcilable to the other. When he tells us that *the shoures of April had perced to the rote the droughte of March*, ver. 1, 2, we must suppose (in order to allow due time for such an operation) that April was far advanced, while on the other hand the place of the sun, *having just run half his course in the Ram*, ver. 7, 8, restrains us to some day in the very latter end of March, as the vernal equinox in the age of Chaucer, according to his own treatise on the *Astrolabe* (4), was computed to happen on the 12th of March. This difficulty may (and I think should) be removed by reading in ver. 8, *the Bull*, instead of *the Ram* (5). All the parts of the description will then be consistent with themselves, and with another passage, [ver. 4425,] where, in the best mss. *the eighte and twenty day of April* is named as the day of the journey to Canterbury.

We will suppose therefore that the preceding day,

(4) In this particular the editions agree with the mss. but in general the printed text of this treatise is so monstrously incorrect that it cannot be cited with any safety.

(5) This correction may seem to be authorized in some measure by Lydgate, who begins his *Continuation of The Canterbury Tales* in this manner;

Whan bright Phœbus *passed was the Ram*

Middle of April, and into the Bull came.

But the truth is that Don John wrote for the most part in a great hurry, and consequently without much accuracy. In the account which he proceeds to give of Chaucer's Tales he not only confounds the circumstances of description of the *Sompnour* and *Pardoner*, but he speaks of the latter as---

Telling a tale to anger with the Frere.

Stories of Thebes, ver. 32—35.

the seven-and-twentieth of April, was the day on which the company assembled at The Tabard. In what year this happened Chaucer has not thought fit to inform us (6): either he did not think it necessary to fix that

(6) It is clear that whether the pilgrimage were real or imaginary Chaucer as a poet had a right to suppose it to have happened at the time which he thought best; he was only to take care, when the time was once fixed, that no circumstances were admitted into his poem which might clash or be inconsistent with the date of it. When no particular date is assigned to a fable of this sort we must naturally imagine that the date of the fable coincides with that of the composition, and accordingly if we examine The Cant. Tales, we shall not find any circumstances which do not perfectly suit with that period which has been stated in a former note (No 3,) as the probable time of Chaucer's beginning to compose them. The latest historical fact mentioned in them is the insurrection of Jakke Straw [*ver.* 15400,] which happened in 1381, and the earliest in which any person of the drama is concerned is the siege of Algezir, [*ver.* 56, 57,] which began in August 1342, and ended with the taking of the city in March 1344: [*Mariana*, l. xvi. c. 10, 11,] the Knight therefore might very well be supposed to have been at that siege, and also upon a pilgrimage to Canterbury in 1383, or thereabouts.----They who are disposed to believe the pilgrimage to have been real, and to have happened in 1383, may support their opinion by the following inscription, which is still to be read upon the inn now called The Talbot in Southwark; "This is the inn where Sir Jeffrey Chaucer and the twenty-nine Pilgrims lodged in their journey to Canterbury, anno 1383." Though the present inscription is evidently of a very recent date, we might suppose it to have been propagated to us by a succession of faithful transcripts from the very time, but unluckily there is too good reason to be assured that the first inscription of this sort was not earlier than the last century. Mr. Speght, who appears to have been inquisitive concerning this inn in 1597, has left us this account of it in his Glossary, v. *Tabard*; "A jaquet or sleevelesse coate, worne in times past by noblemen in the

point at all, or perhaps he postponed it till the completion of his work should enable him to assign such a date to his fable as should be consistent with all the historical circumstances which he might take occasion to introduce into it.

§ 6. A second point intended to be defined in the Prologue is the number of the company; and this too has its difficulties. They are said, in ver. 24, to have been *nine-and-twenty*, but it is not clear whether Chau-

"warres, but now onely by heraults, and is called theyre
 "coate of armes in servise; it is the signe of an inne in South-
 "warke by London, within the which was the lodging of the
 "Abbot of Hyde by Winchester. This was the hostelry where
 "Chaucer and the other pilgrims mett together, and with
 "Henry Bailly their hoste accorded about the manner of their
 "journey to Canterbury. And whereas thro' time it hath bin
 "much decayed, it is now by master J. Preston, with the Abbot's
 "house thereto adjoynded, newly repaired, and with convenient
 "roomes much encreased for the receipt of many guests."—
 If any inscription of this kind had then been there he would
 hardly have omitted to mention it, and therefore I am per-
 suaded it has been put up since his time, and most probably
 when the sign was changed from The Tabard to The Talbot, in
 order to preserve the ancient glory of the house notwithstanding
 its new title. Whoever furnished the date must be allowed
 to have at least invented plausibly.--While I am upon the sub-
 ject of this famous Hostelry I will just add, that it was probably
 parcel of two tenements which appear to have been conveyed
 by William de Ludegarisale to the Abbot, &c. *de Hyda juxta*
Winton, in 1306, and which are described (in a former con-
 veyance there recited) to extend in length, "a communi fos-
 "sato de Southwerke versus Orientem, usque Regiam viam
 "de Sowthwerke versus Occidentem." *Registrum de Hyde*,
 "ms. Harl. 1761, fol. 166---173. If we should ever be so hap-
 py as to recover the account-books of the Abbey of Hyde we
 may possibly learn what rent Harry Bailly paid for his inn, and
 many other important particulars.

cer himself is included in that number; they might therefore, according to that passage, be *thirty*; but if we reckon the several characters as they are enumerated in the Prologue we shall find them *one-and-thirty*; 1. a Knight, 2. a Squier, 3. a Yeman, 4. a Prioreſſe, 5. an other Nonne, 6, 7, 8. three Preeſtes, 9. a Monk, 10. a Frere, 11. a Marchant, 12. a Clerk of Oxenforde, 13. a Sergeant of the Lawe, 14. a Frankelcin, 15. an Haberdasher, 16. a Carpenter, 17. a Webbe, 18. a Deyer, 19. a Tapifer, 20. a Coke, 21. a Shipman, 22. a Doctour of Phyſike, 23. a Wiſ of Bathe, 24. a Perſone, 25. a Plowman, 26. a Reve, 27. a Miller, 28. a Sompnour, 29. a Pardoner, 30. a Manciple, 31. Chaucer himſelf. It muſt be obſerved however that in this liſt there is one very ſuſpicious article, which is that of the *three Preeſtes*. As it appears evidently to have been the deſign of Chaucer to compoſe his company of individuals of different ranks, in order to produce a greater variety of diſtinct characters, we can hardly conceive that he would, in this ſingle inſtance, introduce *three* of the ſame profeſſion without any diſcriminating circumſtances whatever; and in fact when the Nonne's Preeſt is called upon to tell his Tale, (ver. 14814,) he is accoſed by the Hoſt in a manner which will not permit us to ſuppoſe that two others of the ſame denomination were preſent. This muſt be allowed to be a ſtrong objection to the genuinenefs of that article of the *three Preeſtes*; but it is not the only one. All the other characters are particularly deſcribed, and moſt of them very much at large, whereas the whole that is ſaid of the *other Nonne* and the *three Preeſtes* is contained in theſe two lines (ver. 163, 4,) at the end of the Prioreſſe's character;

Another Nonne alſo with hire had ſhe,
That was hire chapellein, and Preeſtes three,

Where it is also observable that the single circumstance of description is false, for no nonne could be a chaplain. The chief duty of a chaplain was to say mass and to hear confession, neither of which offices could regularly be performed by a nonne or by any woman (7.)

It should seem, therefore, that we have sufficient ground to reject these two lines, or at least the second, as an interpolation (8,) by which means we shall get

(7) It appears that some abbesses did at one time attempt to hear the confessions of their nuns, and to exercise some other smaller parts of the clerical function, but this practice, I apprehend, was soon stopped by Gregory IX. who has forbidden it in the strongest terms, *Decretal.* l. v. tit. 38, c. x.; "Novaquam nostris sunt auribus intinua, quod Abbatissæ moniales proprias benedicunt; ipsarum quoque confessiones in criminibus audiant, et legentes Evangelium præsumunt publice prædicare: cum igitur id absolum sit et pariter absurdum, Mandamus quatenus ne id de cætero fiat cunctis firmiter inhibere." If these presumptuous abbesses had ventured to say mass his Holiness would doubtless have thundered still louder against them.

(8) My notion (I cannot call it opinion) of the matter is this, that the first of these lines did really begin the character of the Nonne, which Chaucer had originally inserted in this place, together with that of the Nonne's Preest, at as great length as the other characters, but they were both afterwards expunged either by himself, or (more probably) by those who published his work after his death, for reasons of nearly the same kind with those which occasioned the suppression of the latter part of The Clerk's Tale. I suspect our bard had been rather too gay in his description of these two religious persons. See a little concerning the Preest, ver. 15453—65.----If it should be thought improbable that an interpolator would insert any thing so absurd and contradictory to the Author's plan as the second line, I beg leave to suggest that it is still more improbable that such a line should have come from the Author himself; and further,

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rid of *two* of the Preeftes, and the detail of the characters will agree with the grofs number in ver. 24, Chaucer himfelf being included among the *nine-and-twenty*. As novelifts generally delight in even numbers it is not improbable that the Hoft was intended to be the thirtieth: though not under the fame obligation with the other pilgrims, he might nevertheless tell his Tale among them as a volunteer.

§ 7. This leads me, in the third place, to examine what the *agreement* was which the pilgrims entered into at the fuggestion of the Hoft with refpect to the number of Tales that each perfon was to tell. The propofal of the Hoft ftands thus, with very little variation, in all the mss.;

This is the point—[fays he, ver. 792—5.]

That eche of you, to shorten with youre way

In this viage fhall tellen Tales tway,

To Canterbury ward I mene it fo,

And homeward he fhall tellen other two.

From this paffage we fhould certainly conclude that each of them was to tell *two* Tales in the journey to Canterbury, and *two more* in the journey homeward; but all the other paffages in which mention is made of this agreement would rather lead us to believe that they were to tell only *one* Tale in each journey, and the Prologue to The Parfon's Tale ftrongly confirms this latter fuppofition. The Hoft fays there, [ver. 17317.]

Now lacketh us no Tales mo than on—

and calling upon the Parfon to tell this one Tale which was wanting, he fays to him, [ver. 17325,]

I think I can promife, in the courfe of the following Work, to point out feveral other undoubted interpolations, which are as the full as abfurd as the fubject of our prefent difcuffion.

—ne breke thou not our play,
For every man, save thou, hath told his Tale.

The Parson therefore had not told any Tale before, and only one Tale was expected from him (and consequently from each of the others) upon that journey.

It is true that a very slight alteration of the passage first cited would reconcile that too to this hypothesis; if it were written—

That eche of you, to shorten with youre way
In this viage shal tellea Tales tway,
To Canterbury ward I mene it o,
And homeward he shal tell another to —

the original proposition of the Host would perfectly agree with what appears to have been the subsequent practice. However, I cannot venture to propote such an alteration of the text in opposition to so many mss. some of them of the best note; and therefore the reader, if he is so pleased, may consider this as one of those inconsistencies hinted at above which prove too plainly that the Author had not finished his Work.

§ 8. The remainder of the Prologue is employed in describing the characters of the pilgrims and their first setting out upon their journey. The little that it may be necessary to say in illustration of some of the characters I shall reserve for the Notes. The circumstances of their setting out are related succinctly and naturally; and the contrivance of appointing the Knight *by lot* to tell the first Tale is a happy one, as it affords the Author the opportunity of giving his Work a splendid opening, and at the same time does not infringe that apparent equality upon which the freedom of discourse, and consequently the ease and good humour of every society, so entirely depends. The general satisfaction which this appointment is

said to give to the company puts us in mind of a similar gratification to the secret wishes of the Grecian army when the lot of fighting with Hector falls to Ajax, though there is not the least probability that Chaucer had ever read the Iliad even in a translation.

§ 9. *The Knight's Tale*, or at least a poem upon the same subject, was originally composed by Chaucer as a separate work: as such it is mentioned by him, among some of his other works, in *The Legend of Gode Women*, [ver. 420, 1,] under the title of—*All the Love of Palamon and Arcite of Thebes, though the storie is knowne lye*—and the last words seem to imply that it had not made itself very popular. It is not impossible that at first it was a mere translation of *The Thefeida* of Boccace, and that its present form was given to it when Chaucer determined to assign it the first place among his *Canterbury Tales*. As *The Thefeida*, upon which this *Tale* is entirely founded, is very rarely to be met with (9,) it may not be unpleasing to the

(9) The letter which Boccace sent to the Fiammetta with this poem is dated *di Napoli a 15 d'Aprile 1341*. [*Lettere di xliii. Uomini illust. Ven. 1564.*] I believe that date is a true one, and it is remarkable as being the very year and month in which Petrarch received the laurel at Rome. The long friendship which subsisted between these two extraordinary men must probably have commenced in the preceding winter, when Petrarch came to Naples in order to be examined by King Robert, previously to his going to Rome. Boccace seems to have been present at some of the conversations between him and the king, [*Genial. Decr. l. xiv. c. xxii.*]—The first edition of *The Thefeida*, according to Quadrio, [t. vi. p. 462,] was without date, and under the mistaken title of *Amazonide*, which might have been proper enough for the first book; it was soon after however reprinted, with its true title, at Ferrara in 1475, fol. De. Aikew was so obliging as to lend me the only copy of this edit.

reader to see here a short summary of it, which will shew with what skill Chaucer has proceeded in reducing a poem of about ten thousand lines to a little more than two thousand, without omitting any material circumstance.

The Thefeida is distributed into twelve books or cantos.

which I have ever heard of in England. The Rev. Mr. Cross has a later edit. in 4to, printed at Venice in 1528, but in that the poem has been *riveuto e emendato*, that is, in plain English, modernized. I cannot help suspecting that Salvini, who has inveighed with great bitterness against the corruptions of the printed Thefeida, [*Manni. Ist. del Decam. p. 52.*] had only examined this last edition, for I observe that a stanza which he has quoted (from some ms. as I suppose) is not near so correct as it is in the edit. of 1475. As this stanza contains Boccace's own account of the intention of his poem I shall transcribe it here from that edition. It is the beginning of his conclusion;

Poi che le Muse nude cominciaro
Nel conspetto de gli omeni ad andare,
Gia fur de quelli che [gial] le exercitaro
Con bello stilo in *bonello* parlare,
E altri in *amoroso* lo operaro,
Ma tu, o libro, primo al lor cantare
Di *Marte* fai gli affanni sostenuti,
Nel vulgar Latino mai piu non veduti.

This plainly alludes to a passage in Dante, *de Vulgari Eloquenzia*, l. ii. c. 2, where, after having pointed out the three great subjects of poetry, *viz. arma, amorem, et veritatem*, (war, love, and morality,) and enumerated the illustrious writers upon each, he adds, *arma vero nullum Italum adhuc invenio poetasse*. Boccace therefore apparently prides himself upon having supplied the defect remarked by Dante, and upon being the first who taught the Italian Muses to sing of arms. — Besides other variations for the worse the fifth line in Salvini's copy is written thus;

Ed altri in dolci modi l'operaro

by which means the allusion to Dante is rendered incomplete.

B. I. Contains the war of Theseus with the Amazons, their submission to him, and his marriage with Hippolyta.

B. II. Theseus having spent two years in Scythia is reproached by Pirithous in a vision, and immediately returns to Athens with Hippolyta and her sister Emilia. He enters the city in triumph, finds the Grecian ladies in the temple of Clemenzia, marches to Thebes, kills Creon, &c. and brings home Palemone and Arcita, who are

Damnat---ad eterna presone.

B. III. Emilia walking in a garden and singing is heard and seen first by Arcita (10,) who calls Palemone. They are both equally enamoured of her, but without any jealousy or rivalry. Emilia is supposed to see them at the window, and to be not displeased with their admiration.—Arcita is released at the request of Pirithous, takes his leave of Palemone with embraces, &c.

B. IV. Arcita, having changed his name to Paltheo, goes into the service of Menelaus at Mycenæ, and afterwards of Pelæus at Ægina; from thence he

(10) In describing the commencement of this amour, which is to be the subject of the remainder of the poem, Chaucer has entirely departed from his author in three principal circumstances, and I think in each with very good reason. 1. By supposing Emilia to be seen first by Palamon he gives him an advantage over his rival which makes the catastrophe more consonant to poetical justice. 2. The picture which Boccace has exhibited of two young princes violently enamoured of the same object without jealousy or rivalry, if not absolutely unnatural, is certainly very insipid and unpoetical. 3. As no consequence is to follow from their being seen by Emilia at this time it is better, I think, to suppose, as Chaucer has done, that they are not seen by her.

returns to Athens, and becomes a favourite servant of Theseus, being known to Emilia though to nobody else, till after some time he is overheard making his complaint in a wood, to which he usually resorted for that purpose, by Pamphilo, a servant of Palemone.

B. V. Upon the report of Pamphilo Palemone begins to be jealous of Arcita, and is desirous to get out of prison in order to fight with him. This he accomplishes with the assistance of Pamphilo, by changing clothes with Alimeto a physician. He goes armed to the wood in quest of Arcita, whom he finds sleeping. At first they are very civil and friendly to each other (11;) then Palemone calls upon Arcita to renounce his pretensions to Emilia, or to fight with him. After many long expostulations on the part of Arcita they fight, and are discovered first by Emilia, who sends for Theseus. When he finds who they are, and the cause of their difference, he forgives them, and proposes the method of deciding their claim to Emilia by a combat of an hundred on each side, to which they gladly agree.

B. VI. Palemone and Arcita live splendidly at Athens, and send out messengers to summon their friends, who arrive, and the principal of them are severally described, viz. Lycurgus, Peleus, Phocus, Telamon, &c. Agamemnon, Menelaus, Castor and Pollux, &c. Nestor, Evander, Pirithous, Ulysses, Diomedes, Pygmalion, Minos, &c. with a great display of ancient history and mythology.

(11) En sieme se fer sessa di bon core,

E li loro accidenti si narraro.

Thes. l. v.

This is surely too much in the style of romance; Chaucer has made them converse more naturally; he has also judiciously avoided to copy Boccace in representing Arcita as more moderate than his rival.

B. VII. Theseus declares the laws of the combat, and the two parties of an hundred on each side are formed. The day before the combat Arcita, after having visited the temples of all the gods, makes a formal prayer to Mars. The prayer being personified (12) is said to go and find Mars in his temple

(12) Era alor forà Marte in exercitio
Di chiara far la parte ruginosa
Del grande suo e horribile hospitio,
Quando de Arcita la oration pietosa
Pervenne li per fare il dato offitio,
Tutta ne lo aspetto lagrimosa;
La qual divene di spavento muta,
Come di Marte hebbe laca veduta.

Thef. l. vii.

As this contrivance of personifying the prayers, and sending them to the several deities, is only in order to introduce a description of the respective temples, it will be allowed, I believe, that Chaucer has attained the same end by a more natural fiction. It is very probable that Boccace caught the idea of making the prayers persons from Homer, with whose works he was better acquainted than most of his contemporaries in this part of the world; and there can be no doubt, I suppose, that Chaucer's imagination, in the expedient which he has substituted, was assisted by the occasional edifices which he had himself seen erected for the decoration of tournaments.——The combat which follows having no foundation in ancient history or manners, it is no wonder that both poets should have admitted a number of incongruous circumstances into their description of it. The great advantage which Chaucer has over his original in this respect is, that he is much shorter. When we have read in *The Thefeida* a long and learned catalogue of all the heroes of antiquity brought together upon this occasion, we are only the more surpris'd to see Theseus, in such an assembly, conferring the honour of knighthood upon the two Theban chieftains;

E senza stare con non piccolo honore
Cinse le spade a li dui scudieri,
E ad Arcita Polluce e Castore
Calciare d'oro li sproni e volontieri.

In Thrace, which is described, and Mars, upon understanding the message, causes favourable signs to be given to Arcita. In the same manner Palemone closes his religious observances with a prayer to Venus. His prayer being also personified, sets out for the temple of Venus on Mount Citherone, which is also described, and the petition is granted. Then the sacrifice of Emilia to Diana is described; her prayer; the appearance of the goddess, and the signs of the two fires.— In the morning they proceed to the theatre with their respective troops, and prepare for the action. Arcita puts up a private prayer to Emilia, and harangues his troop publicly, and Palemone does the same.

B. VIII. Contains a description of the battle, in which Palemone is taken prisoner.

B. IX. The horse of Arcita, being frightened by a Fury sent from hell at the desire of Venus, throws him; however he is carried to Athens in a triumphal chariot with Emilia by his side, is put to bed dangerously ill, and there by his own desire espouses Emilia.

B. X. The funeral of the persons killed in the combat. Arcita being given over by his physicians makes his will in discourse with Theseus, and desires that Palemone may inherit all his possessions, and also Emilia: he then takes leave of Palemone and Emilia, to whom he repeats the same request. Their lamentations. Arcita orders a sacrifice to Mercury, (which Palemone performs for him) and dies.

B. XI. Opens with the passage of Arcita's soul to heaven, imitated from the beginning of the 9th book of Lucan. The funeral of Arcita. Description of the

E Diomede e Ulisse di cuore
Calzati a Palemone, e cavalieri
Ambedui furono allora novelli
Li innamorati Theban damigelli.

Thef. l. vii.

wood felled takes up six stanzas. Palemone builds a temple in honour of him, in which his whole history is painted. The description of this painting is an abridgment of the preceding part of the poem.

B. XII. Theseus proposes to carry into execution Arcita's will by the marriage of Palemone and Emilia: this they both decline for some time in formal speeches, but at last are persuaded and married. The kings, &c. take their leave, and Palemone remains—
in gioia e in diporto Con la sua dona nobile e cortese.

From this sketch of the *Theseida* it is evident enough that Chaucer was obliged to Boccace (13) for the plan

(13) To whom Boccace was obliged is a more difficult subject of inquiry. That the story was of his own invention I think is scarce credible. He speaks of it himself as *very ancient*, [*Lett. all Fiammetta. Biblioth. Smith. App. p. 141;*] "*Trovata una antichissima Storia, e al più delle genti non manifesta, in Latino volgare, acciocchè più dilettaſſe e maſſimamente a voi, che già con ſommo titolo le mie rime eſaltaſſe, ho ridotta.*" He then tells her that he will obſerve that what is related under the name of *one* of the two lovers and of Emilia is very ſimilar to what had actually paſſed between herſelf and him; and adds—"Se forſe alcune coſe ſopercchie vi ſoſſono, il voler bene coprire ciò che non erà oneſto manifeſtare, da noi due in fuori, e'l volere la ſtoria ſeguire, ne ſono cagione." I am well aware, however, that declarations of this kind, prefixed to fabulous works, are not much to be depended upon. The wildeſt of the French romances are commonly ſaid by the authors to be tranſlated from ſome old Latin chronicle at St. Denys: and certainly the ſtory of Palemone and Arcita, as related by Boccace, could not be *very ancient*. If it was of Greek original (as I rather ſuſpect) it muſt have been thrown into its preſent form after the Norman princes had introduced the manners of chivalry into their dominions in Sicily and Italy.—The poem in modern Greek political verſes, *De nuptiis Theſei et Emilie*, printed at Venice in 1529, is a mere tranſlation of The *Theſeida*. The author has even tranſlated the preface epistle addreſſed by Boccace to The *Fiammetta*.

and principal incidents of The Knight's Tale; and in the Notes upon that Tale I shall point out some passages, out of many more, which are literal translations from the Italian.

§ 10. When the Knight has finished his Tale the Host with great propriety calls upon the *Monk*, as the next in rank among the men, to tell the next Tale; but as it seems to have been the intention of Chaucer to avail himself of the variety of his characters, in order to distribute alternate successions of serious and comick in nearly equal proportions throughout his Work, he has contrived that the Host's arrangement shall be set aside by the intrusion of the drunken Miller, whose Tale is such as might be expected from his character and condition, a complete contrast to the Knightes.

§ 11. I have not been able to discover from whence the story of *The Miller's Tale* is taken, so that for the present I must give Chaucer credit for it as his own invention, though in general he appears to have built his Tales, both serious and comick, upon stories which he found ready made. The great difference is, that in his serious pieces he often follows his author with the servility of a mere translator, and in consequence his narration is jejune and constrained; whereas in the comick he is generally satisfied with borrowing a slight hint of his subject, which he varies, enlarges, and embellishes, at pleasure, and gives the whole the air and colour of an original; a sure sign that his genius rather led him to compositions of the latter kind.

§ 12. The next Tale is told by the *Reeve* (who is represented above [ver. 589.] as a cholerick man) in revenge of *The Miller's Tale*. It has been generally said to be borrowed from *The Decameron*, d. ix. n. 6, but I rather think that both Boccace and Chaucer, in this instance, have taken whatever they have in com-

mon from an old *fabliau* or *conte* of an anonymous French rhymers, *De Gombert et des deux Clercs*. The reader may easily satisfy himself upon this head by casting his eye upon the French *Fabliau*, which has lately been printed with several others from mss. in France. See *Fabliaux et Contes*, Paris, 1756, t. ii. p. 115—124.

§ 13. *The Coke's Tale* is imperfect in all the mss. which I have had an opportunity of examining. In ms. A. it seems to have been entirely omitted; and indeed I cannot help suspecting that it was intended to be omitted, at least in this place, as in the Manciple's Prologue when the Coke is called upon to tell a Tale there is no intimation of his having told one before. Perhaps our Author might think that three Tales of *barlotrie*, as he calls it, together would be too much. However, as it is sufficiently certain that the Coke's Prologue and the beginning of his Tale are genuine compositions they have their usual place in this edition. There was not the same reason for inserting The Story of Gamelyn, which in some mss. is annexed to The Coke's Tale. It is not to be found in any of the mss. of the first authority, and the manner, style, and versification, all prove it to have been the work of an author much inferior to Chaucer. I did not therefore think myself warranted to publish it a second time among The Canterbury Tales, though as a relick of our ancient poetry, and the foundation perhaps of Shakespeare's *As you Like It*, I could have wished to see it more accurately printed than it is in the only edition which we have of it.

§ 14. In the Prologue to *The Man of Lawe's Tale* Chaucer recalls our attention to the action (if I may so call it) of his drama, the journey of the pilgrims. They had set out soon after *the day began to spring*, [ver. 824 and f.] When the Reve was beginning to tell his

Tale they were in the neighbourhood of Deptford and Greenwich, and it was *half way prime*, that is, I suppose, *half way past prime*, about half an hour after seven A. M. [ver. 3904, 5.] How much further they were advanced upon their road at this time is not said, but the hour of the day is pointed out to us by two circumstances: we are first told [ver. 4422, 3.] that

——the sonne

The ark of his artificial day had ronne

The fourthe part and half an hour and more ——

and secondly, [ver. 4432.] that he was “five-and-forty degrees high;” and this last circumstance is so confirmed by the mention of a corresponding phenomenon that it is impossible to suspect any error in the number. The equality in length of shadows to their projecting bodies can only happen when the sun is at the height of five-and-forty degrees. Unfortunately however this description, though seemingly intended to be so accurate, will neither enable us to conclude with the mss. that it was *ten of the clock*, nor to fix upon any other hour, as the two circumstances just mentioned are not found to coincide in any part of the 28th (or of any other) day of April (14) in this cli-

(14) The 28th day of April, in the time of Chaucer, answering to our 6th or 7th of May, the sun, in the latitude of London, rose about half hour after four, and the length of the artificial day was a little more than fifteen hours. *A fourth part* of fifteen hours (= three hours forty-five minutes) *and half an hour and more* —— may be fairly computed to make together four hours and a half, which being reckoned from four one half A. M. give the time of the day exactly nine A. M. but the sun was not at the altitude of 45° till about half hour after nine. In like manner if we take the 18th day (according to all the editions and some mss.) we shall find that the sun indeed was 45° high at ten A. M. exactly, but that *the fourth*

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mate. All that we can conclude with certainty is, that it was *not past* ten of the clock.

The compliments which Chaucer has introduced upon his own Writings are modest enough, and quite unexceptionable; but if the reflection [ver. 4497, and f.] upon those who relate such stories as that of Canace or of Apollonius Tyrius was levelled at Gower, as I very much suspect, it will be difficult to reconcile such an attack to our notions of the strict friendship which is generally supposed to have subsisted between the two bards (15.) The attack too at this time must appear the more extraordinary on the part of our bard, as he is just going to put into the mouth of his Man of Lawe a Tale, of which almost every circumstance is borrowed from Gower. The fact is that the story of Canace is related by Gower in his

part of the day and half an hour and more had been completed at nine A. M.—In this uncertainty I have left the text as I found it in all the best mss. only *ms. H. A.* does not express the hour, but reads thus;

Yt was atte cloke—

(15) There is another circumstance which rather inclines me to believe that their friendship suffered some interruption in the latter part of their lives. In the new edition of the *Confessio Amantis*, which Gower published after the accession of Henry IV. the verses in praise of Chaucer [fol. 190. b. col. 1, ed. 1532,] are omitted. [See *ms. Harl.* 3869.] Though perhaps the death of Chaucer at that time had rendered the compliment contained in those verses less proper than it was at first, that alone does not seem to have been a sufficient reason for omitting them, especially as the original date of the work, in the 16 of Richard II. is preserved. Indeed the only other alterations which I have been able to discover are toward the beginning and end, where every thing which had been said in praise of Richard in the first edition is either left out or converted to the use of his successor.

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Conf. Amant. b. iii, and the story of Apollonius (16) (or Apollynus, as he is there called) in the viiith book of the same work; so that if Chaucer really did not mean to reflect upon his old friend his choice of these two instances was rather unlucky.

§ 15. *The Man of Lawe's Tale*, as I have just said, is taken, with very little variation, from Gower, *Conf. Amant.* b. iii. If there could be any doubt, upon a cursory perusal of the two Tales, which of them was written first, the following passage, I think, is sufficient to decide the question. At ver. 5505 Chaucer says—

Som men wold sayn how that the child Maurice,
Doth this message until this emperour—

(16) The history of Apollonius King of Tyre was supposed by Mark Welfer, when he printed it in 1595, to have been translated from the Greek a thousand years before. [*Ekbr. Bib. Gr.* v. 6. p. 821.] It certainly bears strong marks of a Greek original, though it is not (that I know) now extant in that language. The rythmical poem under the same title, in modern Greek, was retranslated (if I may so speak) from the Latin—*απο Λατινικης εις Ρωμαϊκην γλωσσαν*. [*Du Fresne, Index Author. ad Gloss. Græc.*] When Welfer printed it he probably did not know that it had been published already (perhaps more than once) among the *Gesta Romanorum*. In an edition which I have, printed at Rouen in 1521, it makes the 154th chapter. Toward the latter end of the 12th century Godfrey of Viterbo, in his Pantheon or universal Chronicle, inserted this romance as part of the history of the third Antiochus, about 200 years before Christ. It begins thus, [*ms. Reg.* 14 C. xi,]

Filia Seleuci regis fiat clara decore
Matreque defuncta pater arsit in ejus amore.
Res habet effectum, pressa puella dolet.

The rest is in the same metre, with one pentameter only to two hexameters.—Gower, by his own acknowledgment, took his story from the Pantheon, as the author (whoever he was) of Pericles Prince of Tyre professes to have followed Gower.

and we read in Gower that Maurice is actually sent upon this message to the emperour. We may therefore fairly conclude that in this passage Chaucer alludes to Gower, who had treated the same subject before him, but, as he insinuates, with less propriety.

I do not however suppose that Gower was the inventor of this Tale: it had probably passed through several hands before it came to him. I find among the *Cotton, MSS. Cal. A. ii. fol. 67*, an old English rhyme entitled *Emare*, in which the heroine under that name goes through a series of adventures for the most part exactly similar to those of Constance (17 :) but neither was the author of this rhyme the inventor of the story, for in fol. 70. *a*, he refers to his original in *Romans* or *French*; and in the last stanza he tells us expressly——

'Thys ys on of *Brytayne layes*

'That was used by olde dayes.

Of the *Brytayne layes* I shall have occasion to speak more at large when I come to 'The Frankelcin's Tale.

§ 16. 'The Man of Lawe's Tale, in the best MS. is followed by 'The Wife of Bathe's Prologue and Tale, and therefore I have placed them so here; not however merely in compliance with authority, but because, according to the common arrangement, in 'The Merchant's Tale (18) there is a direct reference to 'The

(17) The chief differences are that *Emare* is originally exposed in a boat for refusing to comply with the incestuous desire of the emperour her father; that she is driven on the coast of Galys or Wales, and married to the king of that country. The contrivances of the stepmother, and the consequences of them, are the same in both stories.

(18) ♀. 9559, Justine says to his brother January——

The Wif of Bathe, if ye han understonde,

Of mariage, which ye han now in honde,

Declared hath fel wel in litel space——

Wife of Bathe's Prologue before it has been spoken. Such an impropriety I was glad to remove upon the authority of the best mss. though it had been acquiesced in by all former editors, especially as the same mss. pointed out to me another (I believe the true) place for both *The Marchant's* and *The Squier's Tales*, which have hitherto been printed immediately after *The Man of Lawe's*. But of that hereafter.

§ 17. The want of a few lines to introduce *The Wife of Bathe's Prologue* is perhaps one of those defects, hinted at above, which Chaucer would have supplied if he had lived to finish his Work. The extraordinary length of it, as well as the vein of pleasantry that runs through it, is very suitable to the character of the speaker. The greatest part must have been of Chaucer's own invention, though one may plainly see that he had been reading the popular invectives against marriage and women in general, such as *The Roman de la Rose*, *Valerius ad Rufinum de non ducenda uxore*, and particularly *Hieronymus contra Jovinianum* (19.)

alluding very plainly to this Prologue of the Wife of Bath. The impropriety of such an allusion in the mouth of Justine is gross enough. The truth is that Chaucer has inadvertently given to a character in *The Merchant's Tale* an argument which the Merchant himself might naturally have used upon a similar occasion, after he had heard the Wife of Bath. If we suppose, with the editions, that the Wife of Bath had not at that time spoken her Prologue the impropriety will be increased to an incredible degree.

(19) 'The holy Father,' by way of recommending celibacy, has exerted all his learning and eloquence (and he certainly was not deficient in either) to collect together and aggravate whatever he could find to the prejudice of the female sex. Among other things he has inserted his own translation (probably) of a long extract from what he calls—*liber aureolus*

§ 18. *The Wife of Bathe's Tale* seems to have been taken from the story of Florent in Gower, *Conf. Amant.* b. i, or perhaps from an older narrative in the *Gesta Romanorum*, or some such collection, from which the story of Florent was itself borrowed. However that may have been, it must be allowed that Chaucer has considerably improved the fable by lopping off some improbable as well as unnecessary circumstances; and the transferring of the scene from Sicily to the court of King Arthur must have had a very pleasing effect before the fabulous majesty of that court was quite obliterated.

The old ballad entitled *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine*, [*Ancient Poetry*, vol. iii. p. 11.] which the learned editor thinks may have furnished Chaucer with this Tale, I should rather conjecture (with deference to so good a judge in these matters) to have been composed by one who had read both Gower and Chaucer.

§ 19. *The Tales of the Frere and the Sompneur* are well ingrafted upon that of *The Wife of Bath*. The ill humour which shews itself between those two characters is quite natural, as no two professions at that time

Theophrasti de nuptiis. — Next to him in order of time was the treatise entitled *Epistola Valerii ad Rufinum de non ducenda uxore*, *ms. Reg. 12 D. iii.* It has been printed (for the similarity of its sentiments I suppose) among the works of St. Jerome, though it is evidently of a much later date. Tarnier (from *Wood's ms. Coll.*) attributes it to Walter Map, [*Bib. Brit. v. Map.*] I should not believe it to be older, as John of Salisbury, who has treated of the same subject in his *Polyerat.* l. viii. c. xi, does not appear to have seen it. ----- To these two books Jean de Meun has been obliged for some of the severest strokes in his *Roman de la Rose*, and Chaucer has transfused the quintessence of all the three works (upon the subject of matrimony) into his *Wife of Bath's Prologue* and *Merchant's Tale*.

were at more constant variance. The regular clergy, and particularly the Mendicant Freres, affected a total exemption from all ecclesiastical jurisdiction except that of the Pope, which made them exceedingly obnoxious to the bishops, and of course to all the inferior officers of the national hierarchy.

I have not been able to trace either of these Tales to any author older than Chaucer, and possibly they may both have been built upon some traditional pleasantries which were never before committed to writing.—I am obliged to Mr. Steevens for pointing out to me a story which has a great resemblance, in its principal incidents, to The Frere's Tale: it is quoted by D'Artigny, *Memoires d'Histoire*, &c. t. iii. p. 238, from a collection of sermons by an anonymous Dominican, printed about the beginning of the 16th century, under the title of *Sermones Discipuli*.

§ 20. *The Clerke's Tale* is in a different strain from the three preceding. He tells us, in his Prologue, that he learned it from Petrarch at Padua; and this (by the way) is all the ground that I can find for the notion that Chaucer had seen Petrarch (20) in Italy. It

(20) I can find no older or better authority for this notion than the following passage in Speght's life of Chaucer, prefixed to the edit. in 1597: "Some write that he with Petrarke was present at the marriage of Lionell Duke of Clarence with "Violante daughter of Galeasius Duke of Millaine; yet Paulus Jovius nameth not Chaucer, but Petrarke, he sayth, was "there." It appears from an instrument in Rymer [*Liberat.* 42 Ed. III. m. 1.] that the Duke of Clarence passed from Dover to Calais, in his way to Milan, in the spring of 1368, with a retinue of 457 men and 1280 horses. That Chaucer might have attended the duke upon this occasion is not impossible. He had been, probably, for some time in the king's service, and had received the year before a grant of an annuity of 20

is not easy to say why Chaucer should chuse to own an obligation for this Tale to Petrarch rather than to

marks-----“Pro bono servitio, quod dilectus Vallettus noster, “Galfridus Chaucer nobis impendit et impendet in futurum.” [Pat. 41 Ed. III. p. 1. m. 13, ap. Rymer.] There is a curious account of the feast at this marriage in the *Chronica di Mantoua of Aliprandi*, [Murator. *Antiq. Med. Ævi*. vol. v. p. 11678, et seq.] but he does not give the names of the

Grandi Signori e Baroni Inghilese,
who were (as he says)

Con Messere Lionell' in compagnia.

The most considerable of them were probably those twenty-six (knights and others) who before their setting out for Milan procured the king's license to appoint attornies-general to act for them here. [Franc. 42 Ed. III. m. 8. ap. Rymer.] The name of Chaucer does not appear among them.-----The embassy to Genoa, to which Chaucer was appointed in November 1372, might possibly have afforded him another opportunity of seeing Petrarch. But in the first place, it is uncertain whether he ever went upon that embassy. If he did, the distance from Genoa to Padua, where Petrarch resided, is considerable; and I cannot help thinking that a reverential visit from a minister of the King of England would have been so flattering to the old man that either he himself or some of his biographers must have recorded it. On the other hand, supposing Chaucer at Genoa, it is to be presumed that he would not have been deterred by the difficulties of a much longer journey from paying his respects to the first literary character of the age: and it is remarkable that the time of this embassy, in 1373, is the precise time at which he could have learned the story of Griseldis from Petrarch at Padua; for Petrarch, in all probability, made his translation *in that very year*, and he died in July of the year following.—The inquisitive and judicious author of *Mémoires pour la vie de Petrarque*, gave us hopes [Pref. to t. ii. p. 6,] that he would shew that Chaucer was in connection (*en liaison*) with Petrarch. As he has not

Boccace, from whose Decameron, d. x. n. 10, it was translated by Petrarch in 1373, (the year before his death) as appears by a remarkable letter which he sent with his translation to Boccace. [*Opp. Petrarch. p. 540—7, edit. Basf. 1581.*] It should seem too from the same letter that the story was not invented by Boccace, for Petrarch says “that it had always pleased him when he heard it many years before” (21,) whereas he had not seen The Decameron till very lately.

§ 21. In the *ballade* with which the Clerk concludes his Tale I have changed the order of the three last stanzas, so as to make it end—

And let him care, and wepe, and wringe, and waile---

fulfilled his promise in a later (I fear the last) volume of his very ingenuous work, I suspect that his more accurate researches have not enabled him to verify an opinion which he probably at first adopted upon the credit of some biographer of Chaucer.

(21) —“Cum et mihi semper ante multos annos audita placuisset, et tibi usque adeo placuisse perpenderem, ut vulgari eam stylo tuo censueris non indignam, et sine operis, ubi rhetorum disciplina validiora quolibet collocari jubet.” *Petrarch. loc. cit.* M. L’Abbé de Sade [*Mem. de Petr. t. iii. p. 797.*] says, that the story of Griseldis is taken from an ancient ms. in the library of M. Foucault, entitled *Le Parement des Dames*. If this should have been said upon the authority of Manni, [*Iss. del. Decam. p. 603.*] as I very much suspect, and if Mandt himself meant to refer to M. Galland’s *Discours sur quelques anciens Poetes*, [*Mem. de l’Acad. des I. et B. L. t. ii. p. 686.*] we must look still further for the original of Boccace’s novel. M. Galland says nothing, as I observe, of the antiquity of the ms. “Le titre” he says, “est *Le Parement des Dames*, avec des explications en Prose, où l’on trouve l’histoire de Griseldis que feu M. Perrault a mise en vers:” but he says also expressly that it was a work of Olivier de la Marche, who was not born till many years after the death of Boccace.

and immediately after I have placed *The Marchant's Prologue*, beginning——

*Weeping and wailing, care and other sorwe,
I have enough.-----*

'This arrangement, which recommends itself at first sight, is also supported by so many inst. of the best authority that without great negligence or dulness I could not have either overlooked or rejected it, especially as the whole turn of *The Marchant's Prologue*, and the express mention of Grisilde in ver. 9100, demonstrate that he is supposed to speak with *The Clerke's Tale* fresh in his memory.

§ 22. The scene of *The Marchant's Tale* is laid in Italy, but none of the names except Damian and Justin seem to be Italian, but rather made at pleasure, so that I doubt whether the story be really of Italian growth. The adventure of *The Peartree* I find in a small collection of Latin fables written by one Adolphus, in elegiack verses of his fashion, in the year 1315. As this fable has never been printed but once, and in a book not commonly to be met with, I shall transcribe below (22) the material parts of it, and I dare say the reader will not be very anxious to see any more.

(22) *Adolphi Fabulæ, ap. Leyser. Hist. Poet. Medii Ævi*, p. 2008.

Fabula I.

Cæcus erat quidam, cui pulcra virago———

*In curtis viridi resident hi cespites quadam
Luce. Petit mulier robur adire Pyri.
Vir favet, amplectens mox robur ubique lacertis.
Arbor adunca fuit, qua latuit juvenis.
Amplexatur eam dans basta dulcia. Terram
Incepit colere vomere cum proprio.
Audit vir strepitum. nam saepe carentia sensus
Unius in reliquo, nosco, vigere solet.
Neu miser! exclamat; te lædit adulter ibidem.*

Whatever was the real original of this Tale; the machinery of the Faeries, which Chaucer has used so happily, was probably added by himself; and indeed I cannot help thinking that his Pluto and Proserpina were the true progenitors of Oberon and Titania (23,) or rather that they themselves have, once at least, deigned to revisit our poetical system under the latter names.

Conqueror hoc illi qui dedit esse mihi.
Tunc Deus omnipotens, qui condidit omnia verbo,
Qui sua membra probat, vascula velut figules,
Relituens aciem misero, tonat illico; Fallax
Femina, cur tanta fraude nocere cupis?

Percipit illa virum. Vultu respondet alacri:
Magna dedi medicis; non tibi cura fuit.
Ad, ubi lustra sua fatiis uda petebat Apollo,
Candida splendescens Cynthia luce mera,
Tunc sopor interpit mea languida corpora: quadam
Assistit. insensit auribus illa meis.
Ludere cum juvene studeas in roboris alto;
Præca viro dabitur lux cito, crede mihi.
Quod feci. Dominus ideo tibi munera lucis.
Contulit. idcirco munera redde mihi.
Addidit ille fidem mulieri, de prece cujus
Se sanum credit, mittit et omne nefas.

The same story is inserted among the Fables of Alphonse, printed by Caxton in English, with those of Æsop, Avian, and Poggio, without date; but I do not find it in the original Latin of Alphonse, *ms. Reg. 10. B. xii.* or in any of the French translations of his work that I have examined.

(23) This observation is not meant to extend further than the King and Queen of Faery, in whose characters I think it is plain that Shakespeare, in imitation of Chaucer, has dignified our Gothick elves with the manners and language of the classical gods and goddesses. In the rest of his Faery system Shakespeare seems to have followed the popular superstition of his own time.

§ 23. *The Prologue to The Squier's Tale* appears now for the first time in print. Why it has been omitted by all former editors I cannot guess, except, perhaps, because it did not suit with the place which (for reasons best known to themselves) they were determined to assign to *The Squier's Tale*, that is, after *The Man of Lawe's* and before *The Marchant's*. I have chosen rather to follow the mss. of the best authority in placing *The Squier's Tale* after *The Marchant's*, and in connecting them together by this Prologue, agreeably as I am persuaded to Chaucer's intention. The lines which have usually been printed by way of Prologue to *The Squier's Tale*, as I believe them to have been really composed by Chaucer, though not intended for *The Squier's Prologue*, I have prefixed to *The Shipman's Tale*, for reasons which I shall give when I come to speak of that Tale.

§ 24. I should have been very happy if the mss. which have furnished *The Squier's Prologue* had supplied the deficient part of his Tale, but I fear the judgment of Milton was to true, that this story was *left half-told* by the Author. I have never been able to discover the probable original of this Tale, and yet I should be very hardly brought to believe that the whole, or even any considerable part of it, was of Chaucer's invention.

§ 25. We are now arrived with the common editions (though by a different course) at *The Frankeleine's Tale*; and here again we must be obliged to the mss. not indeed, as in the last instance, for a new Prologue, but for authorizing us to prefix to this Tale of *The Frankeleine* a Prologue which in the common editions is prefixed to *The Tale of the Marchant*, together with the true Prologue of that Tale, as printed above. It is scarce conceivable how these two Pro-

logies could ever be joined together and given to the same character, as they are not only entirely unconnected, but also in one point directly contradictory to each other; for in that which is properly *the Marchant's* he says expressly, [ver. 9110,] that he had been married *two monthes and not more*, whereas in the other the speaker's chief discourse is about *his son*, who is *grown up*. This therefore, upon the authority of the best mss. I have restored to the Frankelcin; and I must observe that the sentiments of it are much more suitable to his character than to that of the Marchant. It is quite natural that a wealthy landholder, of a generous disposition, as he is described [ver. 332—62,] who has been Sheriff, Knight of the Shire, &c. should be anxious to see his son (as we say) *a gentleman*, and that he should talk slightly of money in comparison with polished manners and virtuous endowments; but neither the character which Chaucer has drawn of his Marchant, nor our general notions of the profession at that time, prepare us to expect from him so liberal a strain of thinking.

§ 26. *The Frankelcin's Tale*, as he tells us himself, is taken from a British lay (24;) and the names of

(24) "Les premieres chansons Francoises furent nommées des lais," says M. de la Ravalere, *Poef. du Roi de Nav.* t. i. p. 215; and so far I believe he is right. But I see no foundation for supposing with him (in the same page) that the lay was *une sorte d'elegie*, and that it was derived *du mot Latin Læsus, qui signifie des plaintes*; or [in p. 217,] that it was *la chanson-----la plus majestueuse et la plus grave*. It seems more probable that *lai* in French was anciently a generical term answering to *song* in English. The passage which M. de la Ravalere has quoted from *Le Brut*,

Molt sot de lais, molt sot de notes————

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persons and places, as well as the scene and circumstances of the story, make this account extremely pro-

is thus rendered by our Layamon. [See before, *Essay*, &c. n. 46,]

Ne euthe na mon swa muchel of song.

The same word is used by Peirol d'Alvergn, *ms. Crois*, fol. 85, to denote the *songs* of birds (certainly not of the plaintive kind)

Et li ausell s'en van enamoran

L'un per l'autre, et lan vantas (or *cantas*) et *lais*.

For my own part I am inclined to believe that *liod*, Island, *lied*, Teuton. *leith*, Saxon, and *lai*, French, are all to be deduced from the same Gothick original.—But beside this general sense, the name of *lay* was particularly given to the French translations of certain poems originally composed in Armorican Bretagne, and in the Armorican language: I say the French translations, because *lay* not being (as I can find) an Armorican word, could hardly have been the name by which a species of poetry not imported from France was distinguished by the first composers in Bretagne.-----The chief (perhaps the only) collection of these *lais* that is now extant was translated into French octosyllable verse by a poetess who calls herself *Marie*, the same (without doubt) who made the translation of *Ezope*, quoted by Pasquier [*Rech.* l. viii. ch. i.] and Fauchet, [*L.* ii. n. 84.] and placed by them in the reign of St. Louis, about the middle of the 13th century. Both her works have been preserved together in *ms. Hurl.* 978, in a fair hand, which I see no reason to judge more recent than the latter end of that century.—The *lais* (with which only we are at present concerned) were addressed by her to some king, fol. 139;

En le honur de vous, noble reis,
Ki tant estes pranz e curteis,
A ki tute joie se encline,
E en ki quier tuz biens racine,
M'ontrequis des *lais* assembler,
Par rime faire e reconter.——

A few lines after she names herself,

Oz, *Esigours*, le dit *Marie*.——

bable. The lay itself is either lost or buried (perhaps for ever) in one of those sepulchres of mss. which, by

The titles of the poems in this collection, to the number of twelve, are cited in the Harlein Catalogue: they are, in general, the names of the principal persons in the several stories, and are most of them evidently Armorican; and I think no one can read the stories themselves without being persuaded that they were either really translated from the Armorican language, or at least composed by one who was well acquainted with that language and country.——Though these poems of Marie have of late been so little known as to have entirely escaped the researches of Fauchet and other French antiquaries, they were formerly in high estimation. Denis Piramus, a very tolerable versifier of the Legend of St. Edmund the King [*ms. Cotton, Dom. A. xi.*] allows that Dame Marie (as he calls her) had great merit in the composition of her lays, *though they are not all true*——

E si en est ele mult loee,
E la ryme par tut anee.

A translation of her *lays* (as it should seem) into one of the northern languages was among the books given by Gabriel de la Gardie to the university of Upsal, under the title of *Farie Britannorum Fabule*. [See the descript. of the book by Stephanus, in *Cat. Lib. Septent.* at the end of *Hickes, Gr. A. S. ed.* 1689, 4to, p. 180.] That Chaucer had read them I think extremely probable, not only from a passage in his *Dreme*, [ver. 1820—1926,] which seems to have been copied from the lay of Elidus, but also from the manner in which he makes the Frankelein speak of the Bretons and their compositions. [See the note on ver. 11021.]—However, in Chaucer's time there were other British lays extant beside this collection by Marie. Emaré has been mentioned before, § 15. An old English ballad of *Sir Gowther* [*ms. Reg. 17 B. xliii.*] is said by the writer to have been taken out of one of the *layes of Britanye*: in another place he says—the *first lay of Britanye*. The original of The Frankelein's Tale was probably a third. There were also lays which did not pretend to be British, as *Le Lay d'Aristote*, *Li Lais de l'Oislet*, [*Fa-*

courtesy, are called Libraries; but there are two imitations of it extant by Boccace, the first in the fifth book of his *Philocopo*, and the second in *The Decam.* d. x. n. 5. They agree in every respect with each other, except that the scene and the names are different, and in the latter the narration is less prolix and the style less flowery than in the former, which was a juvenile work (25.) The only material point in which Boc-

Idoux, tom. 1.] Le Lai du Corn, by Robert Bizez, [ms. Bod. 1687.] is said by him to have been invented by Garaduc, who accomplished the adventure in the ballad entitled *The Boy and the Mantle*, [*Anc. Poet. v. iil. p. 1.*] which I suspect to have been made up out of this lay, and *Le Court Mantel*, the successful knight, is called Cradock. Robert Bizez says further, that the horn was still to be seen at Cirencester;

Q'ust a Cirincestre
A une haute feste,
La pureit il veer
Ieest corn tout pur veir.
Ceo dist Robert Bizez—.

In none of these lays do we find the qualities attributed to that sort of composition by M. de la Ravaliere. According to these examples we should rather define the lay to be a species of serious narrative poetry, of a moderate length, in a simple style and light metre. Serious is here opposed (not to pleasant, but) to ludicrous, in order to distinguish the lay from the *conte* or *fabliau*; as on the other hand its moderate length distinguishes it from the *glose*, or common Roman. All the lays that I have seen are in light metre, not exceeding eight syllables. See before, *Essay*, &c. n. 60.

(25) I saw once an edition of the *Philocopo*, printed at Venice, 1563, fol. with a letter at the end of it, in which the publisher, Hieronymo Squarzaccho, says (if I do not misremember) “that this work was written by Boccace at twenty years of age (about 1333,) while he was at Naples in the house of “John Barrile,” [Johannes Barrillus is called by Boccace [G:

cace seems to have departed from his original is this, instead of *the removal of the rocks* the lady desires *a garden full of the flowers and fruits of May in the month of January*; and some such alteration was certainly necessary when the scene came to be removed from Bretagne to Spain and Italy, as it is in Boccace's novels (26.) I should guess that Chaucer has preserved pretty faithfully the principal incidents of the British Tale, tho' he has probably thrown in some smaller circumstances to embellish his narration. The long list of virtuous women in Dorigene's soliloquy is plainly copied from *Hieronymus contra Jovinianum*.

real. Deor. l. xiv. c. 19.] magus spiritus homo. He was sent by King Robert to attend Petrarch to his coronation at Rome, and is introduced by the latter in his second eclogue under the name of Idæus; "ab Idæ, monte Cretenfi, unde et ipse oriundus fuit." *Intentiones eclogarum Franc. Petrarchæ, ms. Bod. 558.* Not knowing at present where to find that edition, I am obliged to rely upon my memory only for this story, which I think highly probable, though it is not mentioned (as I recollect) by any of the other biographers of Boccace. A good life of Boccace is still much wanted.---The adventures of Florio and Biancofiore (which make the principal subject of the Philocopo) were famous long before Boccace, as he himself informs us, l. i. p. 6. edit. 1723. Floris and Blancheflor are mentioned as illustrious lovers by Matfres Eymengau de Bezers, a Languedocian poet, in his *Breviari d'amor*, dated in the year 1288, *ms. Reg. 19 C. i. fol. 199.* It is probable however that the story was enlarged by Boccace, and particularly, I should suppose that the Love-questions in l. v, (the fourth of which questions contains the novel referred to in the text) were added by him.

(26) The Conte Boiarlo (the precursor and model of Ariosto) in his *Orlan. Inamorato*, l. i. ca. 12, has inserted a tale upon the plan of Boccace's two novels, but with considerable alterations, which have carried the story, I apprehend, still further from its British original.

§ 27. Thus far I flatter myself I have been not unsuccessful in restoring the true order and connection with each other of 'The Clerke's, 'The Marchante's, 'The Squiere's, and 'The Frankleine's Tales; but with regard to the next step which I have taken I must own myself more dubious. In all the editions the 'Tales of 'The Nonne and 'The Channone's Yeman precede 'The Doctoure's, but the best mss. agree in removing those 'Tales to the end of 'The Nonne's Preeſte's, and I have not scrupled to adopt this arrangement, which is, I think, indisputably established by the following consideration; when the Monk is called upon for his Tale the pilgrims were near Rochester, [ver. 13932,] but when the Chanon overtakes them they were advanced to Boughton-under-Blee, [ver. 16024,] twenty miles beyond Rochester, so that the 'Tale of 'The Chanone's Yeman, and that of 'The Nonne to which it is annexed, cannot with any propriety be admitted till after 'The Monke's Tale, and consequently not till after 'The Nonne's Preeſte's, which is inseparably linked to that of 'The Monk.

§ 28. These two Tales therefore of 'The Nonne and 'The Chanone's Yeman being removed out of the way 'The Doctoure's comes clearly next to 'The Frankleine's; but how they are to be connected together, and whether at all, is a matter of doubt. What I have printed by way of Prologue to 'The Doctoure's Tale I found in one of the best mss. but only in one; in the others it has no Prologue. The first line applies so naturally and smartly to the Frankleine's conclusion, that I am strongly inclined to believe it from the hand of Chaucer, but I cannot say so much for the five following; I would therefore only wish these lines to be received for the present (according to the law-phraſe) *de bene eſſe*, till they shall either be more

authentically established or superseded by the discovery of the genuine Prologue.

§ 29. In *The Doctoure's Tale* beside Livy (who is quoted) Chaucer may possibly have followed Gower in some particulars, who has also related the story of Virginia, *Conf. Amant.* b. vii, but he has not been a servile copist of either of them.

§ 30. The Pardonere's Tale has a Prologue which connects it with *The Doctoure's*. There is also a pretty long preamble, which may either make part of the Prologue or of the Tale. The mss. differ in this point. I have chosen to throw it into the Tale, and to confine the Prologue to what I suppose to be its proper use, the introduction of the new speaker. When he is once in complete possession of his office of entertaining the company his preface or digressions should all, I think, be equally considered as parts of his Tale.

The mere outline of *The Pardonere's Tale* is to be found in the *Cento Novelle Antiche*. Nov. lxxxii.

§ 31. *The Tale of the Shipman* in the best mss. has no Prologue: what has been printed as such in the common editions is evidently spurious. To supply this defect I have ventured, upon the authority of one ms. (and I confess not one of the best) to prefix to this Tale the Prologue which has usually been prefixed to the Tale of the Squier. As this Prologue was undoubtedly composed by Chaucer it must have had a place somewhere in this edition, and if I cannot prove that it was really intended by him for this place, I think the reader will allow that it fills the vacancy extremely well. The Pardonere's Tale may very properly be called a *thrifty tale*, and he himself a *livered man*, [ver. 12905—3,] and all the latter part, though highly improper in the mouth of the *curteis Squier*, is perfectly suited to the character of the Shipman.

This Tale is generally supposed to be taken from The Decameron, d. viii. n. 1, but I should rather believe that Chaucer was obliged to some older French *fablour*, from whom Boccace had also borrowed the ground-work of his novel, as in the case of The Reve's Tale. Upon either supposition a great part of the incidents must probably have been of his own invention.

§ 32. The transition from the Tale of The Shipman to that of The Prioreſſe is happily managed. I have not been able to discover from what legende of The Miracles of our Lady The Prioreſſe's Tale is taken. From the scene being laid in Asia it should seem that this was one of the oldest of the many stories which have been propagated, at different times, to excite or justify several merciless persecutions of the Jews upon the charge of murdering Christian children (27.) The story of Hugh of Lincoln, which is mentioned in the last stanza, is placed by Matthew Paris under the year 1255.

(27) In the first four months of the *Acta Sanctorum*, by Bollandus, I find the following names of children canonized, as having been murdered by Jews; xxv Mart. Willielmus Norwicensis, 1144. Richardus, Parisiis, 1179. xvii Apr. Rudolphus, Bonna, 1287. Wernerus, Wesaliae. *an. eod.* Albertus, Poloniae, 1598. I suppose the remaining eight months would furnish at least as many more. See a Scottish ballad [*Rel. of Anc. Poet.* v. i. p. 32.] upon one of these supposed murders. The editor has very ingeniously conjectured that *Merryland*, in ver. 1, is a corruption of *Milan*. Perhaps the real occasion of the ballad may have been what is said to have happened at Trent in 1475 to a boy called Simon. The Cardinal Hadrian, about fifty years after, mentioning the rocks of Trent, adds, "quo Judæi ob simonis caedem ne aspirare quidem audent." *Præf. ad librum de Serm. Lat.* The change of the name in the song from Simon to Hugh is natural enough in this country, where similar stories of Hugh of Norwich and Hugh of Lincoln had been long current.

§ 33. Next to the Prioreſſe *Chaucer* himſelf is called upon for his Tale. In the Prologue he has dropped a few touches deſcriptive of his own perſon and manner, by which we learn that he was uſed to look much upon the ground, was of a corpulent habit, and reſerved in his behaviour. His *Rime of Sire Thopas* was clearly intended to ridicule the palpable groſs fictions of the common rhymers of that age, and ſtill more, perhaps, the meannels of their language and verſification. It is full of phraſes taken from *Iſumbras*, *Li beaus Deſconus*, and other romances in the ſame ſtyle, which are ſtill extant. A few of his imitations of them will be pointed out in the Notes.

§ 34. For the more complete reprobation of this ſpecies of rhyming even the Hoſt, who is not to be ſuſpected of too refined a taſte, is made to cry out againſt it, and to cut ſhort *Sire Thopas* in the miſt of his adventures. Chaucer has nothing to ſay for his rhyme but that *it is the beſte he can*, [ver. 13856,] and readily conſents to tell another Tale; but having juſt laughed ſo freely at the bad poetry of his time he might think it, perhaps, too invidious to exhibit a ſpecimen of better in his own perſon, and therefore his other Tale is in proſe, a mere tranſlation from *Le Livre de M. libee et de Dame Prudence*, of which ſeveral copies are ſtill preſerved in mſ. (28.) It is in truth, as he calls it, [ver. 13868,] *a moral tale vertuous*, and was probably much eſteemed in its time, but in this age of levity I doubt ſome readers will be apt to regret that he did not rather give us the remainder of *Sire Thopas*.

(28) Two copies of this work are in the Muſeum, mſ. Reg. 19 C. vii, and 19 C. xi, in French proſe. Du Freſnoy, *Biblioth. des Romans*, v. ii. p. 248, mentions two copies of the ſame work *en vers*, dans la *Bibliothèque Seguiet*.

§ 35. *The Prologue of The Monke's Tale* connects it with Melibee. The Tale itself is certainly formed upon the plan of Boccace's great work *De casibus Virorum Illustrium*, but Chaucer has taken the several stories of which it is composed from different authors, who will be particularized in the Notes.

§ 36. After a reasonable number of melancholy ditties or tragedies, as the Monk calls them, he is interrupted by the Knight, and the Host addresses himself to the Nonne's Preeft to tell them *swiche thing as may their hertes glade*.

The Tale of the Nonne's Preeft is cited by Dryden, together with that of The Wife of Bath, as of Chaucer's own invention. But that great poet was not very conversant with the authors of which Chaucer's library seems to have been composed. The Wife of Bath's Tale has been shewn above to be taken from Gower, and the fable of the Cock and the Fox, which makes the ground of The Nonne's Preeft's Tale, is clearly borrowed from a collection of Æsopæan and other fables by Marie, a French poetess, whose collection of *lais* has been mentioned before in n. 24. As her fable is short and well told, and has never been printed, I shall insert it here at length (29,) and the more will-

(29) From *ms. Harl. 978. f. 76.*

D un cok recunte, ki estot
 Sur un femer, e si chantot.
 Par de lez li vient un gupilz,
 Si l'apela par muz beaus diz.
 Sire, fet il, muz te vei bel;
 Une ne vi si gent oïfel.
 Clere voiz as sur tute rien,
 Fors tun pere, qe jo vi bien;
 Une oïfel meuz ne chanta;
 Mes il le sît meuz, kar il ciuna.
 Si puis jeo fere, diâ li coes.
 Les eies bat, les oilz ad clos,

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ingly because it furnishes a convincing proof how able Chaucer was to work up an excellent Tale out of very small materials.

Chanter quida plus clerement.
 Li gupil saut, e sil prent;
 Vers la forest od lui s'en va.
 Par mi un champ, u il passa,
 Curent apres tut li pastur;
 Li chiens le huent tut entour.
 Veit le gupil, ki le cok tient,
 Mar le guaina si par eus vient.
 Va, fet li coes, si lur eserie,
 Qe sai tuens, ne me larras mie.
 Li gupil volt parler en haut,
 E li coes de sa buche saut.
 Sur un haut fust s'est muntez.
 Quant li gupiltz s'est regardez,
 Mut par se tient enfantille,
 Que li coes l'ad il engiane.
 De mal talent e de droit ire
 La buche commence a maudire,
 Ke parole quant devereit taire.
 Li coes respunt, si dei jeo faire,
 Maudire Poil, ki volt cluiner,
 Quant il deit garder e guaiter,
 Que mai ne vient a lur Seignur.
 Ceo fent li fol tut li plusar,
 Parolent quant deivent taïser,
 Teïsent quant il deivent parler.

The resemblance of Chaucer's Tale to this fable is obvious, and it is the more probable that he really copied from Marie, because no such fable is to be found either in the Greck Æsop or in any of the Latin compilations (that I have seen) which went about in the dark ages under the name of Æsop. Whether it was invented by Marie, or whether she translated it, with the rest of her fables, from the Anglo-Saxon version of Æsop by King Alfred, (as she says herself) I cannot pretend to determine. Though no Anglo-Saxon version of Æsop be now (as I can find) extant, there may have been one formerly, which may have passed (like many other translations into that language) under the name of Alfred; and it may be urged in support of the probability of Marie's positive assertion, that she appears, from passa-

§ 37. The sixteen lines which are printed at the end of The Nonne's Preeft's Tale might perhaps more properly be considered as the beginning of the Prologue to the succeeding Tale, if it were certain what Tale was intended to succeed. In both Dr. Askew's mss. the last of these lines is read thus,—

Seide unto the Nunne as ye shul heer—

and there are six more lines to introduce her Tale; but as these six lines are manifestly forged for the purpose I have chosen rather to adhere to the other mss. which acknowledge themselves defective in this part, and give us The Nonne's Tale as I have done, without any introduction. It is very probable, I think, that Chaucer himself had not determined whether he should connect The Nonne's Tale with that of The Nonne's Preeft, or whether he should interpose a Tale or two, or perhaps more, between them.

The Tale of the Nonne is almost literally translated from the life of St. Cecilia in the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus Januensis. It is mentioned by Chaucer as a separate work in his *Legende of Good Women*, [ver. 426.] under the title of *The Life of Seint Cecile*, and it still retains evident marks that it was not originally composed in the form of a Tale to be *spoken* by the

ges in her *lais*, to have had some knowledge of English. I must observe that the name of the king, whose English version the professes to follow, is differently stated in different mss. In the best ms. *Harl.* 978, it is plainly *Li reis Allured*; in a later ms. *Vesp. B.* xiv, it is *Li reis Henris*. Pasquier [*Recherches*, l. viii. c. i.] calls him *Li roy Auvert*; and Du Chesne (as quoted by Menage, v. *Roman*) *Li rois Mires*: but all the copies agree in making Marie declare that the translated her work *de P'Anglois en Roman*. A Latin *Æsop*, *ms. Reg. 15 A. vii.* has the same story of an English version by order of a *Rex Angliæ Affrus*,

Nonne (30.) However there can be no doubt that Chaucer meant to incorporate it into this collection of *Canterbury Tales*, as the Prologue of the *Chaucer's Yeman* expressly refers to it.

§ 38. The introduction of *The Chaucer's Yeman* to tell a Tale at a time when so many of the original characters remain to be called upon appears a little extraordinary. It should seem that some sudden resentment had determined Chaucer to interrupt the regular course of his Work in order to insert a satire against the alchymists. That their pretended science was much cultivated about this time (31,) and produced its usual

(30) The whole introduction is in the style of a person writing, and not of one speaking. If we compare it with the introduction to *The Prioress's Tale* the difference will be very striking. See particularly ver. 15546;

Yet pray I you that reden that I write—

and in ver. 15530 the relater, or rather writer, of the Tale, in all the mss. (except one of middling authority) is called *Unworþy son of Eve*. Such little inaccuracies are strong proofs of an unfinished work. See before, p. 171.

(31) The first considerable coinage of gold in this country was begun by Edward III. in the year 1343, and according to Camden [in his *Remains*, art. *Money*.] “the alchymists did affirm (as an unwritten verity) that the rosenobles which were coined soon after were made by projection or multiplication alchymical of Raymond Lully in the Tower of London.” In proof of this, “besides the tradition of the rabbies in that faculty,” they alledge, “the inscription, *Jesus autem transiens per medium eorum ibat*,” which they profoundly expounded, as *Jesus passed invisible and in most secret manner by the midst of Pharisees, so that gold was made by invisible and secret art amidst the ignorant*. But others say that text was the only amulet used in that credulous warring age to escape dangers in battles. Thus Camden. I rather believe it was an amulet or charm principally used against thieves, upon the authority of the following passage of Sir John Mandeville, c. x. p. 137, “And

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evils, may fairly be inferred from the act which was passed soon after, 5 Hen. IV. c. iv, to make it felony to multiply gold or silver, or to use the art of multiplication.

§ 39. In the *Prologue to The Manciples Tale* the pilgrims are supposed to be arrived at a little town called *Bob-up-and-down, Under-the-Blee, in Canterbury-way*. I cannot find a town of that name in any map, but it must have lain between Boughton (the place

“an half myle fro Nazareth is the lepe of oure Lord; for the
 “Jewes ladden him upon an highe roche for to make him lepe
 “down and have slayn him; but Jesu passed amonges hem, and
 “lepte upon another roche; and yit ben the Reppes of his feet
 “sene in the roche where he allyghte. And therefore seyn sum
 “men whan thei dreden hem of theses on any weye, or of eney
 “myes, *Jesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat*; that is
 “to seyne, *Jesu forsothe passynge be the myddes of hem he went*;
 “in tokene and mynde that oure Lord passed thorghe out the
 “Jewes crueltee, and scaped sally fro hem; so surely moove men
 “*passen the perile of theses.*” See also *Catal. mss. Harl. n. 2966*.
 It must be owned that a spell against thieves was the most serviceable if not the most elegant inscription that could be put upon gold coin.—Ashmole, in his *Theatrum Chemicum*, p. 44, has repeated this ridiculous story concerning Lully with additional circumstances, as if he really believed it, though Lully, by the best accounts, had been dead above twenty years before Edward III. began to coin gold.—The same author (*Macrochirophitus Anglicus*, as he styles himself) has inserted among his *Hermetique Mysteries*, [p. 213,] an old English poem under the title of *Hermes Bird*, which (he says in his Notes, p. 467) was thought to have been written originally by Raymund Lully, or at least made English by Cremer, [*Abbot of Westminster and scholar to Lully*, p. 465.] The truth is that the poem is one of Lydgate's, and had been printed by Caxton under its true title, *The Chorle and the Bird*, and the fable on which it is built is related by Petrus Alphonsus [*de Clericali Disciplina*, mss. Reg. 10 B. xii,] who lived above two hundred years before Lully.

last mentioned) and Canterbury. The fable of the Crow, which is the subject of *The Manciple's Tale*, has been related by so many authors, from Ovid down to Gower, that it is impossible to say whom Chaucer principally followed. His skill in new-dressing an old story was never perhaps more successfully exerted.

§ 40. After the Tale of the Manciple the common editions, since 1542 (32,) place what is called The

(32) In the edition of 1542, when *The Plowman's Tale* was first printed, it was placed *after* *The Person's Tale*. The editor, whoever he was, had not assurance enough (it should seem) to thrust it into the body of the Work. In the subsequent editions however, as it had probably been well received by the publick, upon account of its violent invectives against the church of Rome, it was advanced to a more honourable station, next to *The Manciple's Tale* and *before* *The Person's*. The only account which we have of any ms. of this Tale is from Mr. Speght, who says [Note prefixed to *Plowman's Tale*.] that he had "seene it in written hand in John Stowe's librarie in a booke of such antiquitie as seemed to have been written neare to Chaucer's time." He does not say that it was *among* *The Canterbury Tales*, or that it had *Chaucer's name* to it. We can therefore only judge of it by the internal evidence, and upon that I have no scruple to declare my own opinion that it has not the least resemblance to Chaucer's manner either of writing or thinking in his other Works. Though he and Boccace have laughed at some of the abuses of religion and the disorders of ecclesiastical persons, it is quite incredible that either of them, or even Wickliffe himself, would have railed at the whole government of the church in the style of this *Plowman's Tale*. If they had been disposed to such an attempt their times would not have borne it; but it is probable that Chaucer (though he has been pressed into the service of Protestantism by some zealous writers) was as good a Catholick as men of his understanding and rank in life have generally been. The necessity of auricular confession, one of the great scandals of Popery, cannot be more strongly inculcated than it is in the fol-

Plowman's Tale; but as I cannot understand that there is the least ground of evidence, either external or internal, for believing it be a work of Chaucer's, I have not admitted it into this edition.

§41. *The Person's Prologue* therefore is here placed next to *The Manciple's Tale*, agreeably to all the mss. which are known, and to every edition before 1542. In this Prologue, which introduces the last Tale upon the journey to Canterbury, Chaucer has again pointed out to us the time of the day, but the hour by the clock is very differently represented in the mss. In some it is *ten*, in others *two*, in most of the best mss. *four*, and in one *five*. According to the phenomena here mentioned, the sun being 29° high, and the length of the shadow to the projecting body as 11 to 6, it was *between four and five*. As by this reckoning there were at least three hours left to sunset, one does not well see with what propriety the Host admonishes the Person to *baste him*, because *the sonne wol adoun*, and to be *fructuous in litel space*; and indeed the Person (know-
 lowing Tale of the Person. — I will just observe that Spenser seems to speak of the author of *The Plowman's Tale* as a distinct person from Chaucer, though (in compliance I suppose with the taste of his age) he puts them both on the same footing. In the epilogue to *The Shepherd's Calendar* he says to his book—

Dare not to match thy pipe with *Tityrus* his style,
 Nor with the Pilgrim that *the Plowman* play'd awhile.

I know that Mr. Warton [in his excellent Observations on Spenser, v. i. p. 125,] supposes this passage to refer to *The Visions of Pierce Plowman*, but my reason for differing from him is, that the author of the Visions never, as I remember, speaks of himself in the character of a Ploughman. — Of *The Pilgrim's Tale*, which has also, with as little foundation, been attributed to Chaucer, [*Speght's Life of Chaucer*,] I shall speak in another place. See *Appendix to Preface*, A. n. (c).

ing probably how much time he had good) seems to have paid not the least regard to his admonition, for his Tale (if it may be so called) is twice as long as any of the others. It is entitled in some mss. *Tractatus de Penitentiâ, pro Fabulâ, ut dicitur, Rectoris*; and I much suspect that it is a translation of some such treatise. I cannot recommend it as a very entertaining or edifying performance at this day; but the reader will be pleased to remember, in excuse both of Chaucer and his editor, that considering The Canterbury Tales as a great picture of life and manners the piece would not have been complete if it had not included the religion of the time.

§ 42. What is commonly called *The Retraction*, at the end of The Person's Tale, in several mss. makes part of that Tale; and certainly the appellation of *Little Tretise* suits better with a single Tale than with such a voluminous work as the whole body of Canterbury Tales: but then, on the other hand, the recital which is made in one part of it of several compositions of Chaucer could properly be made by nobody but himself. I have printed it as I found it in *ms. A. 9. 2. 1.* with a few corrections from other mss. and in the Notes I shall give the best account that I can of it.

Having thus gone through the several parts of The Canterbury Tales which are printed in this edition, it may not be improper in the conclusion of this Discourse to state shortly the parts which are wanting to complete the journey to Canterbury; of the rest of Chaucer's intended plan (as has been said before) we have nothing: supposing therefore the number of the pilgrims to have been *twenty-nine*, [see before, § 6.] and allowing the Tale of the Chanone's Yeman to stand in the place of that which we had a right to ex-

pect from the Knight's Yeman, the Tales wanting will be only those of the *five* City-mechanicks and the Ploughman. It is not likely that the Tales told by such characters would have been among the most valuable of the set, but they might, and probably would, have served to link together those which at present are unconnected, and for that reason it is much to be regretted that they either have been lost, or (as I rather believe) were never finished by the Author (33.)

(33) When we recollect that Chaucer's papers must in all probability have fallen into the hands of his son Thomas, who at the time of his father's death was of full age, we can hardly doubt that all proper care was taken of them; and if the Tales in question had ever been inserted among the others, it is scarce conceivable that they should all have slipped out of all the copies of this Work of which we have any knowledge or information. Nor is there any sufficient ground for imagining that so many Tales could have been suppressed by design, though such a supposition may perhaps be admitted to account for the loss of some smaller passages. See above, n. 8.

(B) *A List of mss. collated or consulted, with the abbreviations by which they are cited.*

IN THE MUSEUM.

- A. Ms. Harl. 7335.
- B. Ms. Reg. 18 C. ii. In *Urry's* list, vii.
- C. Ms. Harl. 7334.
- D. Ms. Reg. 17 D. xv. In *Urry's* list, viii.
- E. Ms. Harl. 7333.
- F. Ms. Harl. 1758. In *Urry's* list, i.
- G. Ms. Sloane. A. 1685, xxii D. In *Urry's* list, iii.
- H. Ms. Sloane. A. 1686, xxii D. In *Urry's* list, iv.
- I. Ms. Harl. 1239. In *Urry's* list, ii.

AT OXFORD. *In the Bodleian Library.*

- B. α. N^o 2527, in the printed catalogue.
- B. ε. N^o 1234, *ibid.*
- B. γ. N^o 1476, *ibid.*
- B. δ. N^o 3360, *ibid.*
- B. ε. N^o 4138, *ibid.*
- B. ζ. N^o 6420, *ibid.*
- N C. A ms. in the library of New-College.

AT CAMBRIDGE.

- C. 1. In the publick library. N^o D. d. 4, 24.
- C. 2. *Ibid.* N^o I. i. 3, 26.
- T. Ms. in the library of Trinity-College, N^o R. 3, 3.
- Tt. *Ibid.* N^o R. 3. 15.

Ask. 1, 2. Two mss. lent to me by the late Dr. Askew; the second has in it the arms of Henry Deane Archbishop of Canterbury, 1501—3.

HA. A ms. lent to me by Edward Haistwell Esq.

W. A msf. in the possession of the late Mr. P. C. Webb.

Gb. N. Two mss. described in the Pref. to ed. *Urr.* the one as belonging to Charles Cholmondeley Esq. of Vale-Royal in Cheshire, and the other to Mr. Norton of Southwick in Hampshire. The editor quotes them from the collations of Mr. W. Thomas mentioned in *App. A. n. (n.)*

Of these mss. the most credit is certainly due to the five following, *viz.* *A. G.* 1, *Ask* 1, 2, and *HA.* The four last exhibit the *Tales* in exactly the same order in which they are printed in this edition; and so does *A.* except that it wants 'The Coke's Tale, [See the *Discourse*, &c. § 13,] and has 'The Nonne's Tale inserted between 'The Sompnoure's and 'The Clerke's. It is also unluckily very imperfect, beginning only at ver. 1204, and ending (with several intermediate breaks) at ver. 12610 in 'The Pardoner's Tale.

N. B. 'The editt. of Chaucer by Caxton and Pynson are cited by these abbreviations, *Ca.* 1, 2, *Pynf.* 1, 2.—*Sp.* and *Urr.* are put for the editt. by Speght and Urry.—*M.* stands for the edit. of the Prologue and Knight's Tale in 1737.—The other editt. are cited by their respective dates; if no date is mentioned the reference is to the edit. of 1542 by John Reyne.

EXTRACT

From Mr. Timothy Thomas's Preface to ed. Urry 1721.

FOR the correcting and improving a great number of places where the text had been corrupted in the common editions, and so made unintelligible, and sometimes downright nonsense, and that such pieces as were judged to be Chaucer's which had not been before printed might be recovered and appear in this edition, and in short to make the book in all respects more correct and complete, it was thought necessary to collect not only all the printed editions of value, but also all the mss. that could be procured. I find no account of the printed copies which Mr. Urry had perused, but he has left a catalogue of the mss. made use of in this edition, which is very particular both with respect to the contents and condition of them, and also the names of the persons from whom they were borrowed, or by whose means they were procured, an Abstract of which is thought proper to be here inserted, not only to inform the reader of the advantages of this edition above the former ones, but also to inform any person that may hereafter undertake a new edition of this Author where to make his inquiries in order to a further improvement of him.

1. In the first place he mentions two mss. belonging to the right Hon. the Earl of Oxford; one of them is a large folio, written on vellum in a fair hand, marked 93, B. ii, and in the glossary, H. i, containing The Canterbury Tales, but it is imperfect in several places; it has The Tale of Gamelyn (which wants the beginning) as spoken by the Coke, and The Coke's Tale is the running-title of it. The ms. begins thus, *Here beginneth the book of The Tales of Caunterburie compiled by Geffraye Chauciers, of Brytayne chef poete.* It hath the Retraction after The Parson's Tale, and at the end of

it this note, *Here endeth the book of The Tales of Caunterburye, compyled by Gessfraie Chaucers, of whos soule Jhu Crist haue mercye. Amen, quod Gernhyll*, which seems to be the transcriber's name. This book has some particularities in the orthography, as *sch* for *sh*, (so *seho* for *she*) *w* sometimes for *u* or *v*, *y* very frequently for *i*. The first letters of such Tales as are perfect at the beginning are beautifully illuminated in this ms. and it is probable that the pictures of the pilgrims were intended to be inserted before their Tales, there being a void space left capable of containing them, but none of them were finished, unless we may suppose that of the Knight to be done, which might be the occasion of cutting out the first leaf of that Tale.

2. The other Harleian ms. is likewise written on vellum in a long folio, marked 67, C. 3, and contains besides the poem of Troilus and Creseide, part of The Knight's Tale, and the Tales of The Man of Lawe, The Wifé of Bath, The Clerk of Oxenford, and The Frankeleyn, which last differs in the beginning from the printed editions. In the first letters of Troilus and Creseide (which begins the book) are the arms of Speke and Shepey empaled, and at the end of the Tales, which are written in another hand, is this note, which seems to be added by the writer of the latter part of it, *Vestre magnifice et generosissime dominacionis humilium serviens et orat. heremita de Grenetwyck, mundo qui totaliter segregatus ac mentibus suorum fortuna amicorum et hominum peroblitus.*

3. In the next place he describes two mss. which he had borrowed of the worthy and learned Dr. Sloan, now Sir Hans Sloan, one of them written on vellum, the other on paper: the former is imperfect at the beginning, and ends with the Tale of the Nonne's Preesch; it hath The Legend of Gamelyn, but imperfect, as it is in other places.

4. Sir Hans Sloan's paper ms. besides other imperfections, wants all The Parson's Tale, but The Legend of Gamelyn is there told by the Coke.

5. He then acknowledges the favour of the right Hon. the Earl of Caernarvon, now Duke of Chandos, in allowing him the perusal of a very fair ms. on vellum, well preserved, containing all the Tales, and ending with the Retraction. It may be proper here once for all to advertise the reader that The Ploughman's Tale is not in any of the mss. which Mr. Urry describes, nor in any other that I have seen or been informed of.

6. He borrowed from the Hon. Col. Hen. Worsley a paper ms. imperfect at the beginning and end, containing all the Tales, but in a different order.

7. He saw two mss. in the royal library, one on vellum, N^o 1541, *Lumley*, which contains all the Tales with the Retraction. The story of Gamelyn is thus introduced (as it is in several other mss.) after that of The Unthrifty Prentice;

But hereof wold I passe as now,

And of yong Gamelyn I will tell you.

The Shipman's Tale, by the transcriber's mistake, is in this ms. entitled The Marchand's Tale, The Marchant's being before written in its proper place.

8. The other ms. in the royal library is on paper, and contains the Tales as in the other, but is much torn in The Manciple's and Parson's Tales. Before Gamelyn has it this rubrick, *Here endeth The Tale of the Cook, and here followeth another Tale of the same Cook, a long Legend of yong Gamelyn.*

9. He borrowed, by the means of the Rev. Mr. Harbin and Mr. Yarborough, of Mr. Edmond Canbey of Thorn in Yorkshire, another fair ms. well preserved: this book wants The Coke's Tale and Gamelyn, and

also The Squire's and The Marchaunt's Tales, and is imperfect in the end.

10. He borrowed of Mr. Norton of Southwick in Hampshire, by the favour of John Chicheley Esq. a ms. which he guesses to have been written in the time of Richard II. the writing being very like that in the patent of that king to Chaucer for a pitcher of wine daily; but it is most miserably mangled, a great many leaves being cut out in every part of it, so that there is scarce one Tale or Prologue entire, and particularly The Parson's Tale has neither beginning nor end. The Legend of Gamelyn is introduced in this book by the same verses which have been before set down out of the vellum book in the royal library.

11. The Rev. and learned Dr. Jenkins, Master of St. John's College in Cambridge, and Margaret Professor in that university, procured from the publick library there a very fine ms. for his perusal, in which are many leaves wanting, which are supplied by a modern hand (as he thinks) out of the printed books: it hath before the Tales Chaucer's A, B, C, *Littera de Scogan*, *Ballad de bon Conseil*, a poem beginning

In them when any hert is light,
And flouris frethly spred and spring.

De amico ad amicum responsio, V Books of *Troilus and Creseide*: then follow the Tales in their order; but Mr. Urry does not take notice of The Tale of Gamelyn nor the Retraction in this book. After the Tales are the following poems; The Legend of good Women, *Legenda Cleopatre Regine*, The Legend of Pyramis and Thisbe, The Legend of Dido Queen of Carthage, The Legend of Hippisphile and Medea, The Legend of Lucrece of Rome, The Legend of Philomene, The Legend of Phillis, The Legend of Hypermnestre, The Parlement of Foulis in die Sancti Valentini tent, The

Temple of Glas (but this is Dan Lydgate's *Supplication Amantis*) *La Compleyn*. There are in this book figures of some of the pilgrims on horseback illuminated, which Mr. Urry had not seen in any other ms. of this Author, and he doubts not but this book originally had them all. Before it is the picture of Chaucer drawn by Sir Thomas Occleve on a leaf of his book *De Regimine Principis*, and Mr. Urry had been informed of another upon the margin of one of the same books, and there is a third in the Cotton library at the end of *Otho*, A. xviii.; from which Mr. Urry very justly infers that Occleve, to preserve his master Chaucer's memory, caused his picture to be limned in every book that was presented by him to his friends, of the number of which seems to be that beautiful copy of it in the Royal Society's library, [N^o 38,] which besides a picture of Occleve presenting a book to Henry V. had doubtless Chaucer's picture on a leaf, where that honourable mention is made of him, which has been cut out perhaps to adorn some ms. of Chaucer, such as that here described in the publick library at Cambridge, or that in the Cotton library, which last contains no more of Chaucer than those poems beginning, *Flie fro the prese*, &c. and *Sometyme the worlde so fiedfast was and stable*, (which is there entitled *Balade Ryalle made by Poeticall Chaucyer*) Chaucer's Song to his empty Purse, and the first stanza of Troilus's song in the first book of that poem.

12. Mr. Urry gives an account of a ms. of the late Bishop of Ely which he had collated, containing all the Tales with Gamelyn and the Retraction, thus introduced at the end of The Parson's Tale, *Here takith the Maker of this book his leave*; and after it this rubrick, *Here endith The Canterbury Tales compiled by Geoffrey Chaucer; of whose soule Jhu Christ have mercy. Amen.*

Volume I.

U

13. 'The Hon. Mrs. Thynne, widow of the Hon. Henry Thynne Esq. son to the late Lord Viscount Weymouth, was pleased to lend him a ms. purchased by her, which had belonged to Mr. Long, a Prebendary of the church of Exeter. It is a fair book, but is imperfect at the beginning and end, and wants 'The Coke's Tale and that of Gamelyn; but this defect is sufficiently compensated by the addition of two new pieces, not extant in any of the other mss. which are there inserted between the 'Tale of the Chanon's Yeman and Chaucer's Tale of Melibeus, *viz.* The Adventure of the Pardoner and the Tapster at the Inn in Canterbury, and The Merchant's Tale in the pilgrims' return from thence, of which more hereafter.

14. The last ms. mentioned by Mr. Urry is a fair and perfect one, borrowed from Sir Nicholas L'Estrange. This he says was the best preserved of any he had seen, and not deficient in any leaves that he had observed. He supposes it had been Sir Henry Spelman's, by the characters of *Sr H. S.* on the outside of the cover, the book having been newly bound in 1623. He gives no farther account of it, but that it contains the following Tales, which being not set down as in his description of the other ms. it should seem he did not live to go through it.

With these helps Mr. Urry had made several corrections throughout the greatest part of Chaucer's Works, and had prepared a fair copy for the press, written partly in his own hand and partly by Mr. Ainsworth, to the end of The Frankeleyn's Tale. He also printed proposals for subscriptions some time before his death, which happened in March 1714.

In the proposals it was published that three new Tales of this Author, never yet printed, were recovered, and would be added to this edition, by which were certainly meant The Coke's Tale of Gamelyn, The Mer-

chant's Second Tale, or, The History of Beryn, and 'The Adventure of the Pardoner and Tapster at the Inn at Canterbury. Though the latter is not properly a Tale, but an account of the behaviour of the pilgrims, and particularly of the Pardoner, at their journey's end, and a kind of prologue to a set of Tales to be told in their return, it was not judged proper to make any alteration in that part of the titlepage, lest it should be thought that any thing is omitted in this edition which was intended by Mr. Urry.

As to The Tale of Gamelyn, Mr. Urry's sentiments concerning it may be seen in the note before it. Mr. Selden was of opinion * that what is called The Tale of the Unthrifty Prentice was only a kind of prelude, and not the Tale itself, which the Coke intended to tell, and that those two verses which immediately precede it, viz.

And therewithall he lough and made [glad †] chere,
And seid his Tale, as you shall after here——

are misplaced, and should have come after it, as an introduction to The Tale of Gamelyn, and he says they were so placed in a very fair ms. which he had, and in some others.

It were to be wished that this Tale had been more carefully collated with the several mss. wherein it is found: it may be made much more perfect and correct from the two mss. which I have had an opportunity of collating, viz. the Harleian ms. H. 1, and Mr. Cholmondeley's ms. which shall be described in its proper place. I shall not take notice here of the minute variations, some of them which affect the sense being noted in the glossary as occasion offered; I shall only make a few remarks out of them in this place.

* De Synedriis Ebraeorum. Amst. 1679, l. ii. c. 2, § iii. p. 360.

† So it is in *ms. Ch.*

The reader will observe a lacuna after verse 477, which may be made up out of those mss. thus;

Thanne seyde yong Gamelyn
Unto the champioun,
Thou art falle aboute
For to brynge me adoun.

And ver. 530, 531, are thus read in *ms. Ch.*

There weren two gentellimen,
God yeve hem gode grace,
That comen to Gamelyn,
Were keperis of the place.

Ver. 540, 541;

Thanne seyde the champioun,
So browke I my swere.

After ver. 555, *ms. Ch.* proceed thus;

And seyde have Gamelyn, thee ring and the ram
For thee beste wraffelere, that evere here cam.
And thus wan, &c.

which may be made very good metre with very little alteration.

Instead of *beste*, ver. 647, should be read *cheffe*, i. e. quarrel, debate, &c. See Gower's *Conf. Amant.* l. ii. fol. 49, b. edit. 1554.

Ver. 706, may be read,

Of fiftene plowis land the prow. [*See ver. 713.*]

Instead of *bonde*, ver. 865, *H.* hath bound; but *ms. Ch.* hath it *bandefast*. In ver. 972 both mss. want *be*, which is only an explanation of *worthe*. After *root*, ver. 1192, should follow;

Adam seyde Gamelyn,
What ben now thy redis?
Here comith the shiregereve,
And woulde have our hedis.
Adam seyde to Gamelyn
My rede is now this, &c.

Instead of *say*, ver. 1226, the mss. have *see*; and ver. 1413, *Both husbände and wif*; and ver. 1629, *And with the justice speke*. And ver. 1692 and the following verses may out of them be thus read;

Gamelyn sette hym adoun
In the Justic'is sete,
And Adam and Ote his brother *
Settyn at his sete.
Whanne Gamelyn was sette
In the Justic'is fiede,
Will ye herin of a bourde,
That Gamelyn [tho] dede?
He lete † sette the Justice, &c.

These are some of the most material amendments that may be made out of these mss. I doubt not but many more as considerable may be made by an exact collation of all the mss. wherein this Tale is to be found.

There is very little to be added to what has been said before concerning the other two pieces added in this edition. As they are printed from the single ms. of Mrs. Thynne the reader is to expect no more than an exact transcript from it, which Mr. Ainsworth assured me he had made. It may (perhaps with some shew of reason) be suspected that Chaucer was not the author of them, but a later writer, who may have taken the hint from what is suggested in ver. 796 of the Prologues, that the pilgrims were to tell Tales in their return homewards; but as to that the reader must be left to his own judgment. But supposing they were not writ by our Author, we are however obliged to Mr. Urry's diligence for finding out and publishing two ancient poems not unworthy our perusal; and they have as good a

* H. 1, hath these verses thus;

And Sir Ote his brother by hym, and Adam at his sete.

† So it is in *ms. Ch.*

right to appear at the end of this edition as Lydgate's Story of Thebes had to be printed in former ones.

When the greatest part of the Tales were printed off there came to my hands another ms. of The Canterbury Tales which Mr. Urry had not seen. It belongs to Charles Cholmondeley Esq. of Vale-Royal in Cheshire, whose name should be mentioned with particular respect for his readiness in communicating this ms. without any previous application, as soon as he understood where a new edition of Chaucer's Works was preparing. It is imperfect at the beginning and in most of the Tales, but those of the Friere and Sompneur are entirely lost. This ms. hath the Retraction at the end of The Parson's Tale. Though this was the first copy of it which I had seen, yet I had an opportunity of collating it with other copies before it went to the press, and therefore the reader may expect to find it more complete and correct than any single ms. represents it. The valuableness of it will appear by the use which has been made of it in the glossary. It was indeed designed that some of the different readings of it should have been set down at the bottom of the page in those Tales which were not printed off when I received it, but my direction being misunderstood at the press some of them were inserted in the text.

A ms. in octavo, partly written on vellum and partly on paper, containing the five books of Troilus and Creseide, I found amongst books and papers left by Mr. Urry, but I could not perceive that he had made any use of it. It came not to my hands till a long time after that poem was printed off, but where upon collating I have found any material variations in the reading I have inserted them in the glossary. When I made this use of it I did not know to whom it belonged, and therefore quoted it in the manner mentioned a-

love, because it seemed to have once belonged to that learned antiquary Sir Henry Spelman, his name [*Henrici Spelman*] being written in a fair hand on the first leaf of it, and at the beginning of other tracts contained in that volume; but I have been since informed that it belonged to the late Lord Viscount Weymouth, from whom it is probable Mr. Urry borrowed it not long before his death, which might be the reason that no notice is taken of it in that catalogue he left of the mss. which he had seen and perused.

There is another ms. of this poem in the Lord Harley's library, which has been occasionally consulted when any difficulty occurred in revising the glossary, and is there meant by *H. 3.*

It may be of use in this place to give the reader notice of another ms. in the Harleian library, [34, B. 18,] which though it contains but two small pieces of our Author's, viz. *How Pyte is dede*, &c. and that beginning, *The longe Nyghtis*, &c. it may be worth an editor's while to collate for the many improvements and corrections that may be made from it, especially in the former poem, one of which is observed under *Herrenus* in the glossary, wherein this book is designed by *H. 4.*

And it may be equally useful to a future editor to be advertised that Chaucer's Tale of Melibeus and his wife Prudence may receive considerable improvements from a fragment of it at the end of a paper ms. [N^o 140,] in the Arundelian collection belonging to the Royal Society, which is the only ms. there that contains any of our Author's works. This is mentioned here to prevent any future loss of time in searching amongst those mss. for the continuation of The Squier's Tale, which some have pretended to have been complete in Arundel-House library*; nor is it likely the

* *Phillips's Theatrum Poet.* part ii. p. 51.

curious inquirer should be more successful in his researches elsewhere for the remainder of that Tale, which no doubt was left imperfect by the Author, as it is mentioned in some mss. and in that ms. of Mr. Selden in the Bodl. library [*Archiv. B.* 30, 3360.] After the two verses which we have of the third part of that Tale these eight verses follow;

But I here now wol maken a knotte,
To the tyme it come next to my lotte;
For here ben felawes behynde an hepe truly
That wolden talke full besily,
And have here sport as well as I,
And the day passith certaynly;
Therefore, Oste, taketh now good hede
Who shall nexte telle, and late him spede.

And certainly Spenser was of opinion that Chaucer never finished it when he undertook to carry on that story, so far at least as it made for his purpose, in his *Fairy Queen* *, which gave occasion to others to fancy he wrote a continuation of it. That indeed was attempted by one John Lane in Q. Elizabeth's time; how well he succeeded in his performance is left to the judgment of such as have leisure to peruse it in the Ashmolean Museum, N^o 6937.—I had likewise the assistance of my friends in collating most of the old and all the valuable *editions*, &c.

* See the passage in the *Testimonies*, vol. xiii.

Mr. William Thynne's Epistle dedicatory to King Henry VIII. before Chaucer's Works.

To the Kinges highnesse, my most gracious soveraigne Lord, Henry VIII. by the grace of God King of England and of France, Defensor of the Faith, and Lord of Ireland, &c.

AMONGES all other excellencies, most gracious soveraine Lord, wherewith almighty God hath endowed mankind above the residue of earthly creatures, as an outward declaration of reason or reasonablenesse wherein consisteth the similitude of man unto angels, and the difference between the same and brute beasts, I verayly suppose that speech or language is not to be reputed amonges the smallest or inferiours, for thereby is expressed the conceit of one to another in open and plaine sentence, which in the residue of lively creatures lacketh, and is not shewed amonges them but by certaine covert and derke signes, and that in few thyngs, having course and operation onely of nature. This speech or language, after the confusion of tongues sent by God's punishment for pride and arrogancie of people, hath been by a certaine instinct and disposition naturall devised and invented in sundrie parts of the world, as fellowships or companyings of folks one with another chaunced, much to the outward expressing of the thing in word or sound, according to that whereof it had meaning or signification; but in processe of time, by diligence or policie of people, after divers formes, figures, and impressions, in metall, barks of trees, and other matter used for memorie and knowledge of thyngs then present or passed, sundry letters or carectes were first amonges the Phenices devised and found, with such knittings and joynings of one to another, by a marvellous subtiltie and craft, as counterveiled was and is equivalent to the same languages, so as the conceit of man's mind,

which at the beginning was used to be declared by mouth only, came to such point that it was as sensibly and vively expressed in writing. Hereupon ensued a great occasion and courage unto them that should write to compone and adorne the rudenesse and barbarietie of speech, and to forme it to an eloquent and ordinate perfection, whereunto many, and many great poets and orateurs, have highly employed their studies and courages, leaving thereby notable renoume of themselves, and example perpetuell to their posteritie.

Amonges other the Greekes in all kinds of sciences seemed so to prevaile, and so to ornate their tongue, as yet by other of right noble languages cannot be perfectly imitated or followed. The Latines, by example of the Greekes, have gotten or wonneto them no small glorie in the forming, order, and uttering, of that tongue; out of the which two, if it be well searched, that is to say, Greek and Latin, (though by corruption of speech it should seem much otherwise) have been derived the residue of the languages that be written with the letters or carectes of either of them both. But of all speeches those which most approach to the Latine be the Italian and Spanish tongues, of whome the one by the corruption of the Gothes and Longobardes had her beginning, as Latine spoken by strangers of a barbare understanding; the other, being also Latine, was by Vandales, Gothes, Moores, Saracens, and other, so many times blemished, as marveile it is to see now unto what perfection these two formed out of the Latine and Barbare speeches be reduced. Next unto them in similitude to the Latin is the French tongue, which by diligence of people of the same is in few years passed so amended, as well in pronounciation as in writing, that an Englishman, by a small time exercised in that tongue, hath not lacked ground to make a gram-

mere or rule ordinarie thereof. Though of trouth (which some shall scarcely believe) the Germanes have so formed the order of their language, that in the same is both as much plentie and as nere concordance to the phrase of the Latin as the French tongue hath. And veraily like as all these and the rest have ben thus vigilant and studious to meliorate or amend their languages, so hath there nat lacked amonges us Englishmen which have right well and notably endeavored and emploied themselves to the beautifying and bettering of the English tongue.

Amonges whome, most excellent Prince, my most redoubted and gracious soveraigne Lord, I your most humble vassal, subject, and servaunt, William Thynne, Chief Clerke of your Kechyn, mooved by a certaine inclination and zeale which I have to heare of any thing sounding to the laude and honour of this your noble realme, have taken great delectation, as the tymes and layfers might suffer, to rede and heare the booke of that noble and famous clerke Geoffray Chaucer, in whose Workes is so manifest comprobation of his excellent learning in all kindes of doctrines and sciences, such fruitfulness in wordes, well accordyng to the matter and purpose, so swete and pleasant sentences, such perfection in metre, the composition so adapted, such freshnes of invention, compendiousnesse in narration, suche sensible and open style, lacking neither majestie ne mediocritie covenable in disposition, and such sharpnesse or quicknesse in conclusyon, that it is much to be marvelled how in this tyme (when doubtlesse all good letters were laide asleepe throughout the world, as the thinge whiche either by the disposition and influence of the bodies above, or by other ordinaunce of God, seemed like and was in daunger to have utterly perished) such an ex-

cellent poet in our tong shuld (as it were Nature repugning) spring and arise. For though it had been in Demosthenes or Homerus times, when all learning and excellencie of sciences flourished amonges the Greeks, or in the season that Cicero, prince of eloquence, amonges Latines, lived, yet had it ben a thinge right rare and straunge, and worthy perpetuall laude, that any clerke by learninge or witte coulde then have framed a tonge, before so rude and imperfite, to such a swete ornaturne and composition; likely, if he had lived in these dayes, beinge good letters so restored and revived as they be (if he were not empeched by the envie of such as may tolerate nothing whyche to understande their capacite doth not extend) to have brought it unto a full and finall perfection.

Wherefore, gracious soveraigne Loid, taking such delight and pleasure in the Workes of this noble clerke (as is afore mentioned) I have of a long season much used to rede and visite the same, and as bookes of divers imprints came unto my hands I easily and without great studie might and have deprehended in them many errours, falsities, and depravations, which evidently appeared by the contrarieties and alterations found by collation of the one with the other, whereby I was moved and stirred to make diligent serch where I might find or recover any true copies or exemplaries of the said bookes; whereunto in procelle of time, nat without cost and pain, I attained, and nat onely unto such as seeme to be very true copies of those Workes of Geffrey Chaucer which before had bene put in print, but also to divers others never till nowe imprinted, but remaining almost unknown and in oblivion; whereupon lamenting with my selfe the negligence of the people that have been in this realme,

who doubtlesse were very remisse in the setting forth
or avancement either of the histories thereof, to the
great hinderaunce of the renoume of such noble prin-
ces and valiant conquerours and captaines as have been
in the same, or also of the works of memory of the fa-
mous and excellent clerks in all kinds of sciences that
have flourished therein (of which both sorts it hath
pleased God as highly to nobilitate this isle as any o-
ther region of Christendome) I thought it in manere
appertenaunt unto my dutie, and that of very hone-
stie and love to my country I ought no lesse to doe, than
to put my helping hand to the restauration and bring-
ing againe to light of the said Workes, after the true
copies and exemplaries aforesaid; and devising with
my self who of al other were most worthy, to whom a
thing so excellent and notable should be dedicat, which
to my conceit semeth for the admiration, noveltie, and
straungenesse, that it might be reputed to be of in the
time of the Authour (in comparision as a pure and fine
tried precious or polished jewel out of a rude or in-
digest masse or matere) none could to my thinking
occur that since or in the time of Chaucer was or is
sufficient but only your Majesty roiall, which by dis-
cretion and judgement, as most absolute in wisedome
and all kinds of doctrine, could, and of his innate cle-
mencie and goodnesse would, adde or give any autho-
ritie hereunto.

For this cause, most excellent, and in al vertues most
prestante Prince, I as humbly prostrate before your
singly estate, lowly supplie and beseech the same that
it will vouchsafe to take in good part my poore studie
and desirous minde in reducing unto light this so pre-
cious and necessarie an ornament of the tongue of this
your realme, over-pitous to have been in any point
lost, falsified, or neglected; so that under the shield of

your most royal protection and defence it may goe forth in publick, and prevaile over those that would blemish, deface, and in many things clearely abolish, the laud, renoume, and glorie, heretofore compared and meritoriously acquired by divers princes, and either of this said most noble isle, whereunto nat onely straungers under pretext of high learning and knowledge, of their malicious and perverse mindes, but also some of your owne subjects, blinded in follie and ignoraunce, doe with great studie contend.

Most gracious, victorious, and of God most elect and worthie Prince, my most dread soveraigne Lord, in whom of very merite, dutie, and succession, is renued the glorious title of Defensor of the Christen Faith, which by your noble progenitour, the great Constantine, sometime King of this realme and Emperour of Rome, was next God and his apostles cheesly maintained, corroborate, and defended. Almighty Jesu send to your Highnesse the continuall and everlasting habundaunce of his infinite grace. Amen.

*To the Kinges most noble Grace, and To the Lords and
Knights of the Garter.*

To you, welles of honour and worthinesse,
Our Christen King, the heire and successeur
Unto Justinian's devout tendernesse,
In the faith of Jesu our redemptour;
And to you, Lordis of the Garter, floure
Of chevalrie, as men you clepe and call,
The Lord of vertue and of grace authour
Graunt the fruit of your lofe never appall.

8

O liege Lorde! that have the likenesse
Of Constantine, th' ensample and mirrour
To princes all, in humble buxomenesse
To holy church, O veray sustainer
And pillar of our faith, and werriour
Against heresies the bitter gall,
Doe forth, doe forth, continue your succour,
Hold up Christis banner, let it not fall.

16

This isle or this had ben but Hethenesse
Nad be of your faith the force and vigour;
And yet this day the fiendis crabbednesse
Wenith fully to catch a time and houre
To have on us your lieges a sharpe shoure,
And to his servitude us knitte and thrall;
But aye we trust in you our protectour,
On your constance we awaitin all.

24

Commaundith that no wight have hardinesse,
O worthy King! our Christen emperour,
Of the faith to disputin more or lesse
Openly emonges peple: her errour

X ij

Springeth all day, and engendrith rumour.
 Makith such law, and for ought may befall
 Observe it wele, thereto be ye doctour :
 Doth so, and God in glorie shall you stall,

31

Ye Lordis eke! shining in noble fame,
 To which appropred is the maintenaunce
 Of Christ's cause, in honour of his name,
 Shove on and put his foes to utteraunce ;
 God wolde so, and so wolde eke your legiaunce ;
 To the two eye prikith you your dewte.
 Who so nat kepeth this double observaunce
 Of merite and honour naked is he.

43

Your stile sayith [that] ye ben foes to shame ;
 Now kith of your faith the perseveraunce,
 In which an hepe of us ben halt and lame.
 Our Christen King of Englonde and of Fraunce,
 And ye my Lordis with your alliaunce,
 And other faithful peple that there be,
 Trust I to God shall quench al this noisance,
 And this lond set in high prosperite.

48

Conquest of high prowesse is for to tame
 The wild wodenesse of all this miscreaunce ;
 Right to the rote daily repe ye that fame.
 Slepen nat this, but for God's plesaunce
 And his mother, and in signifaunce
 That ye ben of Saint George's livere,
 Doth him service and knightly obeisaunce,
 For Christis cause is his well knowin ye.

50

Stiffe stand in that, and ye shall greve and grame
 The foe to pece, the norice of distaunce :
 That now is earnest turne it into game ;
 Now kithe of your beleve the constaunce.

Lord leige and Lordis have in remembraunce
 Lord of all is the blisfull Trinite,
 Of whose vertue the mightie habundaunce
 You herten and strengthen in faithfull unite.

64

*Explicit.**Eight goodly Questions with their Answers *.*

SOMETIME in Grece, that noble region,
 There were eight clerkis of full grete science,
 Philosophers of notable discrecion,
 Of whom was asked, to provin their prudence,
 Eight Questions of derke intelligence,
 To which they answered after their entent,
 As here doth appere plaine and evident.

7

The first question was, What ertilly thing
 Is best and unto God most commendable?
 The first clerke answered without taryng,
 A mann's soule ever firme and stable
 In right, [and] from the trouth not variable;
 But now alas! full fore may we wepe,
 For covetise hath broughte trouth asleepe.

14

The second, What thing is most odious?
 A double man, sayed the philosopher,
 With virgine face and a taile venomous,
 With a fair view and a false profer,
 A corrupt carien in a golden tree.

* Septem Sapientum Sententiæ apud Aufon.

Bias Prieneus.

Quenam summa boni? Mens quæ sibi conscia recti.
 Pernicies homini quæ maxima? Solus homo alter.
 Quis dives? Qui nil cupiat. Quis pauper? Avarus.
 Quæ dos matronæ pulcherrima? Vita pudica.
 Quæ casta est? De qua mentiri fama veretur.
 Quod prudentis opus? Quam possit, nolle nocere.
 Quid stulti proprium? Non posse, et velle nocere.

X ii]

It is a monfter in natures linage
One man to havin a double viſage.

27

'The third, [queſtion] What is the beſte dower
'That may be to a wiſe appropriate?
A clene life, was the clerkiſ answer,
Without ſinne, all chaſte, and inviolate,
From all deceits and ſpeeches inornate,
Or countenance which ſhall be to diſpiſe:
No fire make, and then no ſmoke woll ariſe.

28

The fourth queſtion, [was] What maiden may
Be called clene in chaſtitie?
The fourthe clerke answered, Which alway
Every creature is aſhamde on to lie,
Of whom men reporten great honeſtie.
Good maidens kepe youre chaſtitie forth,
And remember that good name is gold worth.

35

[The fiſth] Who' is a pore man ever full of wo?
A covetous man which is a nigon,
He that in his herte can never ſay ho;
The more gode the leſſe diſtribution;
The richer the worſe of condition:
Men in this coaſt clepen him a niggard,
[And] Sir Guy the bribour is his ſteward.

41

[The ſixth] Which is a rich man without fraud?
He that canne to his gode ſuffiſe;
Whatever he hath he yeveth God the laud,
And kepeth him clene from all covetiſe;
He deſires nothing in ungodly wiſe;
His body is here, his mind is above;
He is a rich man, for God doth him love.

ſer

Who is a foole? is the seventh demand;
 He that wolde hurt and hath no powere;
 Might he mickell much wolde he command;
 His malice grete, his might nought were;
 He threteth full fast, full little may he dere:
 He thinketh not how men have sayed beforne
 God sendeth a shreude cowe a short horne.

56

Who is a wise man? is the eight question;
 He that might noye and doth no annoiance,
 Might punish and leaveth puniſſion;
 A man mercifull without vengeance:
 A wise man puttith in remembraunce
 [This] saying, Had I venged all mine harme
 My cloke had not been furrid halfe so warme.

63

*Explicit.**Chaucer's Prophecie*.*

WHEN faith faylith in priest's sawes,
 And lordis hestes are holde for lawes,
 And robberie is holde purchace,
 And lecherie is holde solace,
 Then shall the lond of Albion
 Be brought to great confuſion.

6

It falleth for a gentleman
 To say the best that he can
 Alwaies in mann's absence,
 And the sooth in his presence.
 It commeth by kind of gentil blood
 To cast away all heviſſe
 And gather togither wordis good;
 The werke of wisdom beareth witnesse.

4

8

* So this stanza is entitled in a book in the Ashmolean museum, N^o 6986, 791, p. 162.

*The Reader to Geoffrey Chaucer, prefixed to Speght's edit,
of 1602.*

READER.

WHERE hast thou dwelt, good Geoffrey, all this while
Unknown to us, save only by thy bookes?

CH. In haulks and hearnes, God wot! and in exile,
Where none vouchsaf't to yeeld me words or lookes,
Till one which saw me there, and knew my friends,
Did bring me forth: such grace sometime God sends. 6

READ. But who is he that hath thy bookes repair'd,
And added moe, whereby thou art more graced?

CH. The selfe same man who hath no labor spar'd
To helpe what time and writers had defaced,
And made old words, which were unknown of many,
So plaine that now they may be known of any. 12

READ. Well fare his heart: I love him for thy sake,
Who for thy sake hath taken all this pains.

CH. Would God I knew some means amends to make,
That for his toile he might receive some gains.
But wot ye what? I know his kindnesse such
That for my good he thinks no pains too much. 18

H. E.



Upon the picture of Chaucer, prefixed to Speght's edit. of 1602.

WHAT Pallas' citie owes the heav'nly mind
 Of prudent Socrates, wise Greece's glorie,
 What fame Arpinas spreadingly doth find
 By Tullie's eloquence and oratorie, 5
 What lasting praise sharpe witted Italie
 By Tasso's and by Petrarke's penne obtained,
 What fame Bartas unto proud France hath gained,
 By Seven Daies world poetically strained;

What high renoune is purchas'd unto Spaine,
 Which fresh Dianaes verses do distill, 10
 What praise our neighbour Scotland doth retaine
 By Gawine Douglas in his Virgill quill,
 Or other motions by sweet poets skill,
 The same, and more, faire England challenge may
 By that rare wit and art thou doest display 15
 In verse, which doth Apolloes Muse bewray;
 Then Chaucer live, for still thy verse shall live
 T' unborne poets, which life and light will give. 18

H. E.

FRAN. THYNNE.

See Testimonies of learned men concerning Chaucer and his Works, vol. xiii.

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